New Statesman
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Excerpt from Emma Tennant's new novel
'Woman Beware Woman'

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

the campaign to stop it in Britain

PLUS: Communist Party split ● John Pilger's Nicaraguan report

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New Statesman

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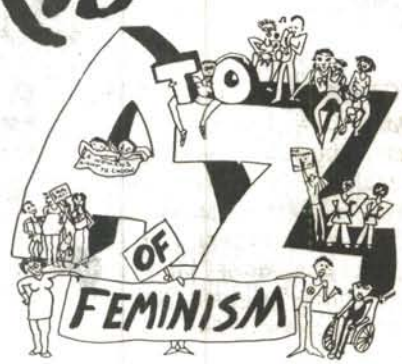

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New Statesman Vol 106 No 2747 11 November 1983

A President without a policy

THERE ARE three chronic ailments afflicting American foreign policy. The first is a paranoia about the Satanic influence of the Soviet Union, which produces the conclusion that the US must dive into every political vacuum in the world because 'who else is going to keep the Russians out?' The second is a febrile delusion that for every problem there must be a solution and that it must be found today. (This condition is made worse by the timetable of Presidential elections and by the personal ambitions of those individuals involved in making US foreign policy at the top.) To these is now added the crusading instability of the President himself and the ignorance about world affairs being shown by those who have come to the top during this Administration.

All three conditions have been evident in the Middle East for the last eighteen months and never more so than in the past few days. What is happening in the Lebanon now is a clear indication of the kind of way in which a third World War is likely to break out. Paradoxically, the line across Europe which marks where the armies of NATO and the Warsaw Pact meet face to face now has a conventional stability both in political and military terms that is almost reassuring. It is unstructured confrontation in other flashpoints that is now more likely to trigger a shooting war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The Middle East is just such an area. Were is not for the fact that some of the others principally involved, like President Assad of Syria, King Hussein of Jordan and the Soviet leadership, have shown themselves to be a great deal cooler and more rational in a highly dangerous situation than has President Reagan, the situation we all face today would be even more explosive.

The lesson which the Americans will not learn is that a show of force and the supply of military equipment is neither a political solution in itself, nor a substitute for one. There are situations where armed force can help to reach a political solution. But it is a formula for disaster to commit forces to a situation without any idea of what even the military, let alone the political, objective is supposed to be. By accepting amateur military advice about the need to take 'decisive action', President Reagan has got himself into a position where American political and military prestige are committed to a policy that does not exist.

The Russians have been far smarter. There is conspicuously no Soviet battle fleet steaming impotently up and down the Lebanese coast and we should all be grateful for their sensible, if self-interested, restraint in the area to date. Mrs Thatcher also seems to have shown commendable, if belated, directness in telling President Reagan that other Western countries do not share his view of the world. She should now give thought to disengaging the British element of the Lebanon 'peace-keeping' force from its exposed and pointless position. □

Protecting fools and knaves

YOU MAY NOT LIKE the politics or the approach of the *Daily Mail*. But you usually have to concede that it does a particular kind of newspaper job with an undeniable professionalism. So it was strange that on Wednesday the *Daily Mail* seemed somehow entirely to have missed a story to which other papers gave considerable prominence. Could it be that the editor, Sir David English, had for once decided that people's private lives and how they spent their money were their own affair? Or could it be that a decision was made to suppress a story concerning the close family of the paper's present proprietor, Lord Rothermere?

Whatever the reason, it seems that the *Mail*'s reporter was not down at the Public Records Office with the rest of them when the Home Office released a clutch of MI5 and Special Branch papers from the 1930s, relating to Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists. So *Daily Mail* readers alone will not know that the then Lord Rothermere was an active supporter and financial contributor to Mosley and the BUF; nor that Mosley's liaison officer with Italian fascists (and conduit for Mussolini funds) was provided with the cover of being the *Mail*'s Rome correspondent; nor that the BUF's activities had steady editorial support from the *Daily Mail*, the *Sunday Despatch* and the *Evening News* (Lord Rothermere prop.).

The real disgrace, though, is that it has taken this long for these papers to be made public and that many relating to the same issue have still been kept under lock and key by order of the Home Office. It has taken a sustained campaign (in which surviving members of the Mosley family themselves joined) to get even this far. The original Home Office ruling was that all these papers should be kept secret for a hundred years 'for reasons of national security.' It was and is a transparently bogus excuse.

There can be nothing that Mosley said or did in the 1930s that could, if now made public, undermine British security in the 1980s. The main document still being withheld is the record of the long judicial interrogation of Mosley conducted by Lord Birkett in 1940. National security could not conceivably be affected by the fruits of that questioning 43 years ago. It is a cover-up to protect aged figures in the British establishment and the immediate descendants of those who behaved either as fools or as knaves in the 1930s.

Obsession with secrecy is one of the worst diseases of the British system of government. It is one of the reasons why the same mistakes are made again and again. One way to advance is to learn from the past by giving publicity to the actions of knaves and the mistakes of fools. The continuing determination to protect the reputations of the pre-war establishment is a blatant and quite unnecessary contradiction of claims that we are an open and democratically accountable society. The rest of the Mosley papers should be released at once. □

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Police Bill critics exercise right to silence

THE NEW version of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill was given a second reading in the Commons on Monday. The original Bill ran into opposition from professional groups such as doctors, lawyers, journalists and social workers.

Will the new Bill meet the same kind of resistance? The Home Office was so fearful of this that it took great trouble to orchestrate the Bill's appearance, preceded by leaks about supposedly significant concessions and accompanied on the day of publication by an absolute barrage of information. This included two White Papers (on police complaints and an independent prosecutor system), revised draft codes governing police practice, procedural guidance on tape-recording of interviews with suspects and, weightiest of all, a 67-page 'Home Office Briefing Guide' on the Bill. Meanwhile, the Bill itself has remained largely unchanged.

All this paper marks a new era at the Home Office. Some officials are now worried that their traditions of liberal independence are under attack in Leon Brittan's regime.

The 'Guide' examines each new power in turn, giving its 'authoritative' version of the present law as well. It asserts, for example, that the present power to set up roadblocks is 'unrestricted', and detention without charge in serious cases is 'open-ended'. It then goes on to explain how the new Bill 'reforms' and 'improves' the existing law. It lists what it says to be the 'criticisms' and gives its 'replies'.

Words like 'modernise', 'clarify' and 'rationalise' abound in the Guide, but there are also plenty of moments of sheer partisan disingenuity, such as its claim that black youths will not be stopped and searched in a discriminatory way because 'the mere fact that a person is black would never of course of itself be sufficient and a search conducted on this sole basis would be unlawful. The person searched would have a remedy at civil law'.

The line on the Bill now being promoted by the Home Office replaces the original argument made by the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, which was that the police need new powers because the existing ones are too weak.

It is not yet clear how professional groups will react to the Bill. Although the government has kept its promise to exempt individual medical and social work records from search warrants, there are still plenty of problems in the Bill. For example, it still grants police the power to carry out forcible 'intimate body searches' (a euphemism for probing into vaginas and anuses), previously condemned by the British Medical Association as dangerous. The only change is in the reason the police may give. Intimate searches must now be to look for articles likely to cause injury; an earlier alternative reason – to look for evidence – has been omitted.

Another influential group who are likely still to be unhappy are the journalists. The Bill exempts journalistic material acquired in confidence from its search-warrant provisions – but this will necessitate definitions of both journalism and confidential acquisition. The Briefing Guide attempts to anticipate criticism by pointing out that the exemption is not limited to 'professional journalism', but it does not comment on the overlap between journalism and campaigning activity – for example with groups producing newsletters.

So far, however, many professional organisations have been silent. There has been little from the BMA or the journalists. The Law Society has not yet publicly repudiated the Home Secretary's addition to their definition of a 'serious arrestable offence': this will allow the definition to be decided by the individual circumstances of a victim of financial loss, thereby including petty thieves who steal 'the widow's mite'.

The position of the church, who were influential in opposing the last Bill, is also unclear. The Church of England Board of Social Responsibility has issued a statement welcoming what it called 'increased safeguards' – effecting an apparent about-turn in its attitude.

Louise Christian

Louise Christian is a lawyer working for the GLC Police Committee Support Unit, but the opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the GLC.

'Modern' policing: unrestricted and open-ended powers

Camera Press

Old Bailey for Newham trial

EIGHT ASIAN youths charged with offences ranging from conspiracy to assault to actual bodily harm and threatening behaviour will now appear at the Old Bailey next Monday. School pupils in Newham had been preparing for a one-day strike this Thursday (10 November) to picket Snaresbrook Crown Court, where the cases were to be heard, but a last-minute defence submission over the composition of the jury to the court administrator at Snaresbrook caused the case to be postponed and moved to the Old Bailey.

The Newham Eight were arrested and charged more than a year ago, in September 1982, after an incident with plain-clothes police which followed a series of racial attacks on Asian schoolchildren. The racial attacks have continued: only last week a young Asian boy was stabbed outside Little Ilford school, the same school where events leading to the arrest of the Newham Eight took place.

A report published last Thursday by the GLC Panel of Inquiry into Racial Harassment drew attention to the increasing number of such attacks in London, and to the ineffective response of the police. The police themselves were not prepared to give evidence to the panel.

Zubaida Motala

Greyfriars bobbies woo social workers

AREA CONSTABLES in Edinburgh have been instructed to make themselves known 'to local officials, e.g. housing department, social workers, gas and electricity board officials, or anyone who has legitimate access to private houses and premises and is in a position to give information'.

The instruction comes in a document headed 'Duties of an Area Constable', which has been obtained by the *New Statesman*. It is dated 11 March 1981 but is believed still to be current police policy in the Edinburgh area.

The document requires an area constable to ensure 'that a good flow of criminal intelligence is fed to the divisional intelligence officer'. To this end, every officer 'should secure the services of at least one informant on every street, not particularly a paid professional informant, but someone who knows what is going on'.

When asked to comment, the new Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders, William Sutherland, said he had not read the document. But its tone seems consistent with his own strong support for 'inter-agency co-operation' and the idea of 'corporate policing', currently much in vogue with the Metropolitan Police and the Home Office.

Speaking to social workers and community workers in Edinburgh two weeks ago, Sutherland repeatedly emphasised the role and responsibility of social workers, planners and other local government officials in 'implementing a combined effort in the area through a corporate approach'.

At the same meeting, however, the Chief Constable appeared to reverse previous policy when he said that the controversial Lothian and Borders police computer would not be used to store 'criminal intelligence'. Concern had been expressed that the computer would be used to improve access to the manual index, which holds intelligence records (including gossip) on some 80,000 people – one in ten of the local population.

Sutherland's statement that the computer will not hold criminal intelligence increases uncertainty about the function of the so-called 'nominal index', which is due to go on-line early next year. This index can hold information on up to 50,000 people.

'I do not see the nominal index as being intelligence at all,' the chief constable said. 'I see the nominal index as saying someone has been convicted of a criminal offence.'

Richard Kinsey

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Did Washington ghost-write Scoon's appeal?

IN THE absence of any convincing legal justification for their invasion of Grenada, Washington and the Caribbean states involved in the operation have made much of the alleged request for help from Sir Paul Scoon, the island's governor-general. However, mystery has surrounded the origin of Sir Paul's appeal for military action. A new version of events now discovered by the *NS* strongly suggests that Sir Paul was being manipulated by the US and its allies.

Last week Debora Hughes, press officer to Barbadian premier Tom Adams, told the *NS* that letters addressed to each country participating in the invasion had in fact been taken *into* Grenada by the invading forces for Sir Paul's signature. There were, she said, two separate batches of identical letters, all dated 24 October – the day before the invasion. She did not know who had drafted the letters, but evidently it was not the governor-general. Ms Hughes insisted that Sir Paul had signed the letters on 'the first day of the invasion' – 25 October.

One batch was taken to Grenada by Brigadier Rudyard Lewis, commander of the Caribbean contingent in the invasion force. The other batch, Ms Hughes said, was taken in by a 'courier' from the US armed services. The idea was that Sir Paul's signatures would be obtained by whichever courier reached him first.

Since the Caribbean troops were assigned only a non-combatant role, it was inevitable that the Americans would be first to reach Sir Paul. On the first day of the invasion an 11-man unit parachuted into the grounds of his residence, but was pinned down for 21 hours by defending forces. It was only on the evening of 26 October that Sir Paul and his family were extricated and flown to the US warship *Guam*. Since Sir Paul signed the written appeal for help on 25 October, he must have done so during the battle raging around his residence, after the letters had been given to him by the US parachute unit.

The official accounts of Sir Paul's 'invitation' have hitherto been wildly conflicting. The prime minister of Dominica, Eugenia Charles, has said that Sir Paul's appeal came during the two-day OECS meeting which began on 21 October. Otto Reich, special adviser to George Schultz, has also insisted that Sir Paul called for help on 21 October. However, two days after that date Sir Paul spoke at his residence to one British and two American diplomats, and gave no indication that the situation demanded military action. In an interview with the BBC's *Panorama* last week, Sir Paul said that it was only late on 23 October that he decided to call for outside help. In the same interview he said: 'What I asked for was not an invasion but help from outside.'

Notwithstanding the chronology offered by Otto Reich, the State Department in Washington is now also giving 23 October as the date of Sir Paul's appeal. However, in an interview with the *Guardian* last week, Sir Paul 'revealed that he had invited the OECS to intervene in a letter sent by Barbadian courier to the Prime Minister of Barbados, Tom Adams, on Monday 24 October'. This is, of course, at odds with the version given by Adams's own press officer, who says that Sir Paul could not put his request in writing because he was under house arrest and his life might have been in danger if a written message had been intercepted.

It is also unclear how much Sir Paul knew of the invasion plans. He told the *Guardian* that 'he had not been aware of the involvement of the US forces until parachute troops landed in the front garden at Government House'. The current issue of *Newsweek* gives a radically different story: 'Scoon was expecting them,' it reports. ' "Welcome Marines", read a sign he placed on his lawn. "It's safe to come in".'

Alan George

MISCELLANY

Seat warming

Tories in Mrs Thatcher's borough of Finchley were nonplussed on 27 October when, at a council by-election, Labour won the 'safe' Conservative seat of St Paul's for the first time ever – and by a majority of 345. But mark the sequel. Last Saturday, security staff from the Tory-controlled council's parks department ordered the Labour Party to remove its three local street stalls. One of the stalls had been held every Saturday for 18 months, and the other two since April, 'without so much as a squeak from the council', according to Mike Freeman, the successful candidate in St Paul's. Freeman points out that if his swing was repeated at a general election Mrs Thatcher would be unseated. Not that he expects this to happen, but it's a warming thought for the long winter months ahead. Of course it *could* happen if a few thousand public-spirited socialists were to move into Finchley and get on to the electoral register. Any offers?

By the seaside

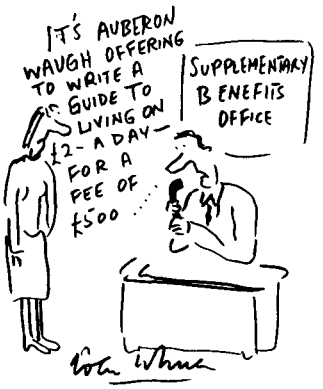
Not even Brighton beach is safe from the privateers. Tory and Alliance councillors have agreed in principle to look at a proposal from a consortium of hotels to lease part of the beach, either to hotel guests only, or – on payment of an entrance fee – to the general public. Alfred Feld, a Tory councillor and hotelier, wants to provide sun umbrellas, beach bars, diving rafts, Martinis and beach games; and a Liberal councillor believes that 'many working people would welcome the opportunity of paying a pound or two for sea-front amenities'. However, a poll conducted by a local paper has come strongly against the idea. And now Graham Ennis, a local amateur historian, has discovered an ancient charter meant to guarantee public access to the beach. It also forbids the erection of buildings. Do beach umbrellas count as buildings? We shall see.

Noble dunce

Challenged by a member of the audience at a recent meeting in Aberdeen, Lady Olga Maitland said that yes, she really did believe that NATO's formation was a direct result of the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact. An attractive notion, milady, spoiled only by the fact that NATO's formation predated the Warsaw Pact by six years.

Pretty rich

Staff at the Low Pay Unit had an unexpected visitor last week – Auberon Waugh, who was preparing an article denouncing the suggestion that millions of Britons live in



poverty or on its margins. (The article duly appeared in last week's *Spectator*.) His purpose in going to the Low Pay Unit's office was to ask the director, Chris Pond, how old he was and how much he was paid; Waugh also wanted to know how many staff were employed at the Unit. Waugh admitted that he came from 'a very rich, well quite rich family'. How then, Pond asked, did he expect those on supplementary benefit to manage on an income (for a family of four and after paying the rent) of just over £2 per person per day? Waugh took this in his stride: 'They must all be on the fiddle.' No doubt most of them keep coal in the jacuzzi as well.

Right Charlie

Before leaving the *Spectator*, we should spare a thought for that paper's elegant young political correspondent, Charles Moore. The November issue of *Harpers and Queen* carries an article by Moore about the 'Noovs' (short for *nouveaux*) who 'control the levers of power' in the cabinet – men such as Cecil Parkinson. (The article was written before Cecil's sudden exit.) What are the distinguishing characteristics of a 'Noov'? Allow Moore to enlighten us: 'On the whole, the Noov is a respectable being, not a Casanova. It would be inconsistent with his code to keep a mistress.' Oh dear.

Up and under

Kinnock's Labour Party is to be a Campaigning Party. And to reflect this, a spanking new 'Campaign Committee' has been set up. It is *not*, however, a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Executive Committee, as are other NEC subcommittees, but an amalgam of the TUC-Labour Party liaison committee and the party's own election-time Clause V committee, which brings together the NEC and the Parliamentary party through the Shadow Cabinet. It thus represents the whole electoral college rather than just annual conference, and is clearly a more powerful body than the NEC. There's one particularly glaring difference. Labour's Standing Order number 4(4)(d) ordains that 'members of the general council of the Trades Union Congress are not eligible for nomination to the NEC'. By the back door, however, general secretaries such as Evans, Basnett, Duffy and Bickerstaffe will sit on this inner committee, by-passing the less controllable and more left-wing NEC.

Heavy handshake

Here is part of the blurb from Stephen Knight's book *The Brotherhood:* 'Recent scandals involving police, criminals and local authority corruption have brought into question certain aspects of masonic influence; in Italy the P2 affair shattered the government and continues to reverberate. Now Stephen Knight goes behind the scenes and looks at some of the criticisms voiced by Freemasons themselves . . .' Oh no he doesn't: as if to illustrate his point about masonic power, the book's publication date has been postponed from 27 October to 26 January next year. The publishers will say only that there was a 'last minute legal difficulty'.

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Problems galore for 'model' Tory borough

LABOUR councillors and trade unionists in the south London borough of Wandsworth can hardly believe their luck. In a few short months the Tory-controlled local authority – often praised by ministers for being a 'model' council – has seen its cherished privatisation campaign come apart at the seams.

A fortnight ago the council was forced to sack Pritchards from the borough's garden maintenance contract, after the firm ran up £138,000 worth of financial penalties in seven months. Last week, refuse collectors walked out on strike after six of their colleagues were sacked. Their employers, Grandmet Waste Services, expressed their 'complete surprise', saying the workers knew that their colleagues were only temporary.

The workers themselves had a different story. Their shop steward, John McLaren, showed the *NS* a long list of grievances: Grandmet's refusal to pay the workers a £6-£8 award won for them under the terms of the (now defunct) Fair Wages Resolution; the allegation that workers now have double the workload that their predecessors had under Wandsworth Council; the allegation that proper equipment is in short supply; and the fact that wages are considerably lower than under direct labour – similar complaints to those made by Pritchards' gardeners when they went on strike this summer.

South Western Star

Grandmet's yard during the Wandsworth strike

The refuse collectors returned to work this week having obtained a reprieve for their six colleagues until at least the end of the year.

Now comes news that the gardeners' union, NUPE, will attempt to force whoever takes over the gardens contract to re-hire the staff employed by Pritchards. The union is prepared to make a test case of regulations governing the transfer of undertakings, which came into effect last year, giving new rights to workers whose employer sells or transfers the business.

On top of this, a legal battle is looming between Pritchards themselves and Wandsworth Council. Under the terms of their gardens contract, Pritchards agreed to indemnify the council against any extra expense incurred in hiring another contractor in its place. The firm is already being asked to subsidise emergency work to clear up the contract's backlog.

In the new year a fresh five-year contract will be handed out to another company. At that stage Pritchards will need to decide if Wandsworth's financial demands are reasonable. If not, the council could find itself in court.

MEANWHILE, the council's plans for selling off entire housing estates, after emptying them of tenants, have been revealed in a secret paper written for the Tory group by the authority's Property Sales Chairman, Peter Bingle. Estates containing asbestos are likely to be the first to be sold in this fashion.

Wandsworth is already decanting over 1,000 council tenants from the Livingstone estate, in Battersea, where all three different types of asbestos have been found (see *NS* October). This week the council announced that 80 families will be moved out of Jay Court, a Battersea tower-block where brown asbestos has been discovered. The council plans to sell the Livingstone estate as low-cost housing, but has not yet officially announced its intentions for Jay Court.

Councillor Bingle's report sets a target of reducing the present 37,700 council dwellings to 30,000 by May 1986, the date of the next borough election, but admits that 'this may be too ambitious'. The report suggests 'a further 300 decants per year for sale', and says 'clearly any further asbestos problems would have to take first priority.'

The report argues that 'modest improvements prior to sales, such as entry-phones installations, could make the blocks much more attractive to tenants'. But it concedes that this 'is likely to be highly controversial . . . since we would undoubtedly be accused of spending HIP quota (the government's Housing Investment Programme funds) on blocks earmarked for sale, at the expense of the remaining estates'.

Councillor Bingle is also candid about the reluctance of local estate agents to join his sales drive. 'One agent has offered to act on a commission basis of £150 per successful (Right to Buy) sale. The agent, however, would not be prepared to become directly involved because of his professional image, and would only allow his staff to work in their own time.'

Quentin McDermott

Riot fears at Maidstone jail

PRISONERS in Maidstone report a sharp rise in tension at the jail. This has been particularly noticeable in Medway wing, where there has been a spate of fires and, recently, a round robin letter condemning Leon Brittan's statement about minimum 20-year sentences for certain categories of prisoner.

In the last three months the regime at Maidstone has allegedly become much stricter, with many more prisoners being punished for minor infringements of regulations. Prison officers from other jails, including Brixton, have been drafted in and it is claimed that prison officers at Maidstone now carry riot sticks with them at all times. Prisoners also claim that officers are deliberately provoking incidents.

The reason, it is said, is that officers at Maidstone want the prison to be upgraded to the category of a top-security disposal prison. This would bring a pay rise of about £28 a week. Maidstone has long been considered as a halfway house between a local prison and a dispersal prison.

In Medway wing, it is feared that there will be a serious incident soon. Recent events include the discovery of an incendiary device on 30 October, a fire in a recess on 29 October and burnt-out cells.

The round robin in Medway wing was signed by 90 out of 150 prisoners. Long-term and life prisoners fear that Brittan's policy statement has ended their chances of release.

Particular issues at the prison cover a variety of grievances. It is alleged that a prisoner in his early twenties called Graham Low has been forcibly drugged in the hospital wing. Low was in Weald wing when a group of prisoners were playing with a ouija board 'for a laugh'. One said the board was instructing Low to commit suicide so he scratched his wrists. Prisoners insist it was only a joke; but, joke or not, Low was taken to the hospital wing on 20 August. He was a normal, healthy man but now, it is said, he suffers from involuntary trembling of his whole body even when asleep. Prisoners believe that drugs were 'tested' on him.

The Home Office denied that he was forcibly drugged, but refused to comment on his physical condition. A spokesman said Low was taken to hospital after eating soap and attempting suicide. He has been transferred to Wandsworth in the last fortnight.

Other prisoners are also being subjected to sudden transfers. Charles McGhee, one of the prisoners involved in the Albany protest in May, who was acquitted of mutiny at an internal disciplinary hearing, signed the round robin. It is said that he was constantly 'picked on' from his arrival at Maidstone. He was suddenly moved to Wandsworth on 24 October.

The allegations are serious because it was precisely such a build-up of tension and grievances that preceded the Albany protest in May – and, indeed, all the major protests, such as Parkhurst 1969, Hull 1976 and Wormwood Scrubs 1979.

Terry O'Halloran

Patients' protest

'THE PATIENTS Strike Back' could well be the title of the all-day conference of the Association of Community Health Councils next Tuesday, which is an attempt to bring together all the different groups affected by NHS cuts. The Association agreed before the election that it would hold a Community Health Council Week from 13 November to publicise its activities; but last month it decided, despite stiff opposition from government supporters within the organisation, to have a patients' protest against the cuts as the focus of the week.

Community Health Councils have existed for 10 years but are still none too well known, although they have a national network of offices where they act as both advisers and consumer watchdogs for NHS patients.

This government does not like CHCs, and has done everything short of close them down. It has cut the number of voluntary members of councils from 30 to 18, has tried to reduce the Councils' powers and has withdrawn a grant for the CHC newspaper. Yet CHCs are the only link between the patient and the system.

Council secretaries, from their offices, answer huge numbers of NHS queries. Many complaints are taken to the highest level and from there on to appeal if the outcome is unsatisfactory. During CHC Week the Councils will be drawing attention to the wide range of their activities, from health education and research to the vital hospital visits.

Judith Cook

Further details of the conference from Tony Smythe on 01-388 4814.

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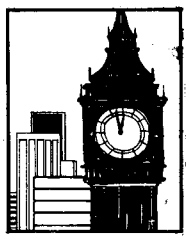

HUGH STEPHENSON

Good Times, Bad Times and Mr Biffen

I REALISE THE DANGER that by now people may be sated with the everyday story of intrigue, fear and spite at Times Newspapers, retold with such disarming innocence by ex-editor H. Evans. But having observed at close quarters a goodly chunk of the events he describes, there are elements of public interest that have not had a full light thrown upon them.

The most important is whether Murdoch's purchase of Times Newspapers in 1981 should have been referred to the Monopolies Commission. John Biffen, who was Trade Secretary at the time and had to take the formal decision, has worked himself up into an indignant lather at the suggestion that he acted improperly or illegally. He acted, he says, exactly as he was advised by his department's lawyers. It's his defence and he's sticking to it.

It is not a defence that stands up to a moment's examination of the 1973 Fair Trading Act, or the facts of the matter. In late January 1981 I rang a friend in the Cabinet Office to discover whether the takeover was likely to be referred to the Commission. To my astonishment (for the terms of the Fair Trading Act seem clear enough) I was told that a reference was most unlikely. 'You don't understand. *She* doesn't see any reason why Murdoch shouldn't own *The Times*. She feels a real debt of gratitude to him for the way the *Sun* backed her in the election. She thinks that was one of the big reasons why she won.'

Biffen himself was in India at the beginning of the critical week. The Act required that the final decision about whether to stop a reference should be made 'by the Secretary of State'. But, given the way in which Whitehall works, there is no doubt that his officials were well aware politically of what the 'right' advice to be prepared for his return should be. He returned on 26 January and announced that the merger would not be referred the following day. The timescale does not lead one to think that Biffen gave the matter an enormous amount of personal attention.

In fact the advice he received was clean counter to the spirit of the Act – and to any commonsense interpretation of its letter as well. Newspapers are specially singled out by the Act – put on the statute book by a previous Tory government. The language of Part V makes it quite clear that Parliament intended a presumption that continual concentration of newspapers in fewer and fewer hands was against the public interest. It starts from the assumption that any merger which involves or creates a newspaper group with a combined circulation of 500,000 or more copies should be unlawful until the Secretary of State has had a report from the Commission. The only automatic exemption is for the takeover of very small papers with a circulation of under 25,000.

The Act contains one small escape route for those wishing to avoid the Monopolies Commission. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the Thomson Organisation (which wanted to dump Times Newspapers), Gordon Brunton (its chief executive) and Warburgs Bank (their financial advisers) moulded their whole selling strategy in order to try to exploit this route. They succeeded, but only on the basis of the most unconvincing mental contortions on the part of the Department of Trade's lawyers and John Biffen's willingness to accept the result as serious or sensible advice.

For, under the Act, the Trade Secretary is empowered to let a newspaper merger go through without a Monopolies reference, if he is satisfied that *the newspaper* concerned in the transfer is not economic *as a going concern;* but even then only if he is also satisfied that 'the case is one of urgency'.

Harry Evans in his account has rather muddied the argument by concentrating on a techical argument as to whether the figures presented to the Department of Trade (and on which it based its advice that the *Sunday Times* was not viable) should or should not have included £4.6 million of 'non-newspaper' revenue in the year 1980. The effect of this sidetrack, however, is to allow Biffen to say that his people were only working on the figures they were given and Murdoch to say that he had nothing to do with them.

THE CORRECT POINT is quite different. The issue was not whether *The Times* or the *Sunday Times* (and the Act required their cases to be considered separately though they were being sold together) had or had not made a trading loss in the last year for which figures were available. The issue was whether each newspaper was 'economic as a going concern'. Now, there was room for argument in the case of *The Times*. As it was produced and accounted for under Thomson it was certainly losing many millions a year. Even then many groups had said that they would like to take on the paper (ranging from the Australian Robert Holmes à Court and the American James Sherwood of Sea Containers to a co-operative-style consortium backed by the *Times* journalists themselves). This might be taken as evidence that there were people of commercial judgment willing to take the thing as a going concern and put their money where their mouth was.

But there was no room for any argument about the *Sunday Times*. It was obvious to a complete tyro accountant that the *Sunday Times* was and is potentially a massively profitable publishing operation. Even Thomsons were forecasting that in their ownership it would make a profit of £5 million in 1981, rising to £13 million in 1983. Any number of offers to buy the *Sunday Times* for hard cash would have been available, but Brunton and Thomsons simply refused to consider them. What is more, there was no objective sense in which 'the case was one of urgency'. The urgency was created by the timetable for the sale established unilaterally by Brunton and Warburgs. They had set a time limit, after which they would close the papers. And at that eleventh hour Biffen was faced with a choice of Murdoch or nothing, because Brunton had imposed a condition that both the *Sunday Times* and *The Times* were to be sold together and because no other potential buyer had been *seriously* considered at any stage. Biffen's undignified role was to be the rubber stamp on a deftly executed evasion of the provisions of the law. It made a monkey of the Fair Trading Act.

The whole issue has now been raked over again as a result of the new Evans book. I gather that the official reaction is to say that on reflection the way in which the episode was handled may not have been quite right: but that what is the point of going over the ground again so long after the event, when nothing can in any case be done. Very British.

That attitude of helpless resignation characterised the whole of the Murdoch takeover of Times Newspapers. Before Thomsons, having been smashed by the print unions in the disastrous £40 million lockout of 1979, decided to cut their losses and sell, the idea that Murdoch would one day own Times Newspapers was a joke. It would have been opposed in principle by both editors, the editor-in-chief, the journalists as a whole and by the national directors. But Brunton decided that, if he had to sell, he would sell to Murdoch. And all effective resistance evaporated. Why Brunton was so determined on Murdoch and on selling both papers together remains a mystery, some day perhaps to be explained.

Nice old Roy Thomson must be turning in his grave. □

Peter Kellner is on holiday.

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Bringing an end to mutilation

Female circumcision is still widely practised in this country. Deborah Pugh examines the legal campaign against it and the social consequences involved

BY THE END of this Parliament it should become illegal for anyone to cut off the genitals – clitoris, labia minora or majora – of any female in Britain. Nonetheless, in the course of this year, this act of mutilation will have been performed on several hundred girls in Britain. Some of the 'operations' will have been carried out by highly paid private doctors. For other girls, it is an older woman from perhaps Somalia, or Egypt, or Ghana, or Nigeria who will do it.

The debate on the Bill to Forbid Female Circumcision, which is taking place in the House of Lords this week, is in many respects a formality. It passed through the Lords in the last parliament, only failing to complete the process because of the general election. Sponsored by Lord Kennet, it has attracted wide support from all parties, and, following a few clarifications, all the medical associations.

Perhaps the most contentious aspect of this Bill is that the legislation it proposes should, in Britain today, be necessary. Female circumcision and infibulation are, however, certainly carried out on young girls in this country – though no one is certain on what scale because no study has been carried out. The report in the *Observer* last February – that a Harley Street consultant, Dr Sunit Ghatak, had admitted to performing the operation on two Nigerian women in a North London clinic – shows only the tip of the iceberg.

The Bill appears to be aimed largely at stopping doctors from operating on women and young girls attracted from abroad by Harley Street's reputation. However, it is from some African immigrant communities in Britain, where the practice is a deeply valued tradition, that the majority of the victims of this practice come. It is the deep cultural acceptance of female circumcision and infibulation, especially among the women themselves, which will be the greatest problem inhibiting the successful implementation of the law. According to Shamis Dirir, head of the Somali Women's Association, all women undergo infibulation in Somalia and the great majority here, if they cannot afford to travel back to Somalia, make every effort to have it performed on their young daughters in this country.

The Bill itself forbids the 'Excise, infibulation or otherwise mutilation of the labia majora or minora or clitoris of a person'. If obeyed, this would bring to an end the present situation – in which women have these vital parts removed and then have the sides of their vulva sewn up by silk or gut sutures. The vagina is left with only a tiny opening, preserved at first by the insertion of a small tube for the passage of blood and urine.

The above form of infibulation is the most extreme and painful mutilation. According to the Minority Rights Group, it is performed on most women in Sudan, Somalia and Mali. Excision, the cutting off of the clitoris and all or part of the labia minora, and circumcision, the cutting off of the hood of the clitoris, are widespread in over 20 African countries. These practices occur among members of all the religious groups including the Falasha Jews of Ethiopia, Christians, Muslims and Animists. Usually the victims are young girls ranging from a few months old to puberty.

ASIDE FROM the loss of the possibility of sexual fulfillment, the immediate complications of these operations range from haemorrhaging to tetanus and septicaemia from unsterilised instruments. The long-term difficulties will plague the infibulated woman, in particular, for the rest of her life. As the vagina is nearly sealed, the ordinary discharge of bodily fluids is inhibited. Blockages and infections are rife and, not infrequently, lead to death.

These chronic problems make sexual relations and childbirth a nightmare for many infibulated women. This is no less the case in Britain, where the medical profession is ignorant of the desperate needs of the thousands of infibulated women who live here. Shamis Dirir tells of a case in which a young bride was held down and cut open, without anaesthetic, by 'unpracticed' members of the community. This followed a refusal by the local National Health hospital to speed up the waiting time for operations (six months to two years) to allow her marriage to be consummated. As Shamis Dirir points out: 'The woman's husband is not going to wait for two years – nor six months, for that matter'.

Childbirth can be another nightmare. Most British doctors appear to prefer to deliver by caesarian section, rather than cut open the stitches and then face the demand, from the woman herself, to 'repair the damage'. However, there is evidence that reinfibulation is being carried out in Britain following childbirth.

Under the strain of an alien and, for some, hostile culture, many Somali marriages have broken down. The increasing isolation of the women appears to lead to a stronger attachment to certain aspects of their traditions. This is especially the case with regard to their concern for their honour and reputation, and that of their daughters. In its turn, this question of honour is intimately related to the continuing prevalence of female circumcision. To the societies that practise it, it represents a guarantee of virginity before marriage and an insurance of female chastity in marriage.

WHILE OUTSIDERS undoubtedly find the practice deeply shocking and want desperately to identify the guilty party, the truth is that most women involved believe in the justification of the process and are the sex who carry it out in Somalia and elsewhere. For a variety of reasons, they accept and continue to support the belief that infibulation, which is supposed to result in a smooth genital area, is a necessary part of being 'clean' and suitable for marriage.

The need for sensitivity in the implementation of this law is obvious Most Somali women have only relatively recently joined their husbands in Britain. This is the consequence of tighter immigration laws which have made it difficult for the Somali seamen to work out of British ports and still be able to spend sufficient time with their families in Somalia. Many women are illiterate and isolated at home. Yet these women do have an advantage. They are easier to organise because the estimated 9,000 Somalis who live in Britain are clustered around the dock areas of Liverpool, Cardiff and London's East End. Other communities are far more difficult to reach.

New Statesman

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Andrew Wiard/Report

Efua Graham (left) amd Shamis Dirir: campaigners for abolition, but for education as well

While clearly aimed at stopping the doctors who carry out these mutilations, the law's penalties could also be applied to the families of the mutilated. To 'procure or take part in or facilitate the commission of any of the acts' can lead to a fine of up to £1,000 and/or a prison sentence of anything up to five years.

Efua Stella Graham is the director of FORWARD, the Foundation for Woman's Health Research and Development. A priority of this new organisation is the ending of female circumcision and infibulation in African and immigrant communities in Europe – with most stress placed on the terrible (frequently fatal) damage that the practice can cause. A down-to-earth Ghanaian, who trained as a nurse in Britain, Mrs Graham has been working for years on the issue. She has developed close contacts with the campaigns to counter circumcision which African women are leading throughout the continent.

Mrs Graham wholeheartedly supports the current Bill, but she also has reservations about its possible applications. 'I panicked when the Bill was coming up. What is going to happen to these communities?' It is her opinion that there is a desperate need for this legislation to be combined with a well thought out education programme conducted by informed members of these communities themselves. 'If something isn't done and the law is passed in a vacuum, I can see a poor African family coming up against it without realising they have broken the law.'

THIS IS NOT implausible, given that, in the Somali community at least, most women do not read English sufficiently well to understand a newspaper. According to Efua Graham, few, if any, are aware that the practice is the subject of an international debate. Her concerns are echoed by Shamis Dirir, who believes that the proposed law lacks any backup at the grass roots. She is worried that, unless funding is made available for an intensive education programme, conducted in native languages, the whole practice may go even further underground – in which case families might increasingly be tempted to endanger their daughters' lives by being afraid to have them treated should complications set in.

As it is, it is very difficult to penetrate the protective secrecy of many of these communities – especially over such a personal practice – to discover who is actually carrying out the infibulations.

Efua Graham emphasises that any education programme must be conducted within the context of literacy and health programmes among mothers and their daughters. This approach is backed up by the experience she and Shamis Dirir have had in counselling mothers who are considering whether or not to break with tradition. Two weeks ago, they were approached by the anguished mother of an 11-year-old girl. Her daughter was being taunted by her British-born Somali girlfriends, who had already been infibulated and are now convinced of their elevated status. This girl now feels that she must conform and, in addition, the mother is under pressure.

Lord Kennet is confident that, once the Bill is passed into law, the appropriate government departments can begin combatting the practice. Activists within the affected communities clearly hope that the government will step in to fund already existing voluntary organisations, while also being sensitive in the initial application of the law to the families involved. □

FORWARD can be contacted at the African Centre, 38 King Street, London WC2.

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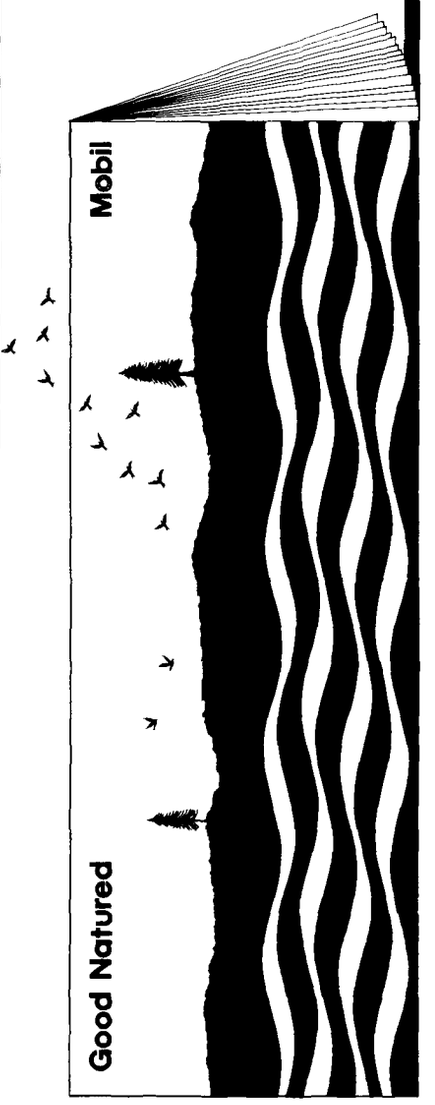

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Comrades divided

Sarah Benton describes the splits that face the CP as it prepares for its Congress

IF THE BRITISH COMMUNIST Party's 'Eurocommunist' and 'Stalinist' wings hold any common hope, it is that the other will leave the party after this weekend's Congress is over. By rights the evacuees should be the Stalinists, or hardliners, for all preliminary head counts of branch delegates show they will be in the minority. They have in fact been the minority group since the late 1960s, when they came into being as a discrete pressure group within the party.

This has not, however, in fact handed over the control of the Communist Party to the rival 'soft' Eurocommunists. Rather the fierce opposition of the two groups, divided by a profoundly different approach to politics, has staked the party to a tiny and dwindling patch of ground. As one critic, University economics lecturer Pat Devine, wrote in the official pre-Congress discussion:

> Instead of leading (the executive) has sought to manage the Party, in a vain attempt to hold together comrades – now coalesced into distinct tendencies – with irreconcilable analyses, strategies and political practices. The result has been paralysis with Party members pulling in different ways, a lack of any clear sense of political direction and the increasing marginalisation of the Party in British political life.

This year the policy disputes are on a familiar range of subjects. On all of them, the Eurocommunists are allying to defend the executive against the Stalinists, who are expected to make up from one third to two fifths of the delegates. The issues are Poland – where the hardliners are for martial law; peace – where the hardliners dispute any idea that the USSR bears any responsibility for the Cold War or arms race; the 'role of the party' – where hardliners talk of being a vanguard party and dream of sharing the right to burrow into the Labour Party; and the party's monthly, *Marxism Today* – which, for Stalinists, is indistinguishable from a capitalist fashion magazine.

At first sight it's the same mix as before, with this time the hardliners concentrating their attack on *Marxism Today* and its controversial assessment of what the Left should do and think in order to recover from the crushing general election defeat. But this is being overshadowed by the crisis over the daily *Morning Star*.

Until recently, there was not a political hair to be split between Gordon McLennan, party General Secretary and Tony Chater, the Star's editor. Both were middle-aged, middle-of-the-road men, slightly overwhelmed by their jobs and cautious about proposals for change. Now they represent the two sides of the most serious difference within the Party for over a quarter of a century – serious not because of the political gulf between the two men but because on them hangs the future disposal of significant organisational and material resources.

In one sense, the two men are merely the proxies for a much larger political fight. For what is new in 1983 is the attempt to make Chater the figurehead for united 'hardline' forces – a difficult job as most stalwart Stalinists regard him and ex-industrial organiser Mick Costello as dangerously late converts to the pro-Soviet cause. In an attempt to get hardline unity at the Congress, unambiguous calls to forgive and welcome back the prodigal sons have gone out in pre-Congress discussion papers. Long-term hardliner and *Star* Women's Page editor Mikki Doyle writes:

> I haven't always agreed with Mick Costello or for that matter Tony Chater but because of my profound belief that people's ideas can change, I welcome the contribution they are now making to change the course that our leadership has now set disastrously . . .

Editor Chater, 'hardliner'; (right) Editor Jacques, 'too fashionable'

Ken Gill, Communist General Secretary of TASS, has similarly publicly called on the comrades to back the analysis which has now been put forward by Mick Costello, and at other times by Tony Benn, against *Marxism Today*'s editor Martin Jacques and Eric Hobsbawm. More importantly, Costello has explicitly called for a new leadership for the party.

Whatever their political differences in the past, the common interest of Gill, Chater and old hardliners would be in forging a new trade-union based 'vanguard' for the Left. Whatever battles select left-dominated unions thought they could fight and win would, by definition, become the priorities of the socialist movement as a whole. An independent *Morning Star* would then be the focus for this sort of trade union vanguard.

Some inkling of its role can be gained from a confidential speech made by Ken Gill to selected communists in TASS last year, a copy of which was sent to the *New Statesman*. In it he spoke of how TASS had been seen as offering more distinct leadership than had the CP and he fiercely attacked any communist or left-wing critics of his leadership of TASS:

> We as a party have to confirm our leadership. It is not acceptable that when we achieve leadership we then win a reputation for splits, divisions and individualism, giving support and comfort to enemies.

Although Gill, along with Costello and Benn, has publicly attacked the stress in *Marxism Today* on the popularity of right-wing ideas among trade unionists, he declares in this speech that left action is urgent because 'right-wing ideas are spreading their influence in the trade union movement and the labour movement is drifting to the right.'

In preparation for a new *Star*/union/hardline nexus, the paper has organised half a dozen Readers' Meetings in provincial cities. More importantly, the PPPS – People's Press Printing Society, the co-op that owns the *Star* and its building – is preparing for independence from the CP by declaring that if it buys a new printing press, it can gain a new income by being the 'labour movement's printer'.

This claim appears to rest on a number of, at best, questionable assumptions. The first is that the labour movement will raise several million pounds to launch a daily paper, which the PPPS will get the contract to print, and which will be so successful that it will keep the PPPS going. In fact, opinion of those interested in the project is tending towards the belief that it would be better to raise money to buy shares in the *Daily Mirror*, thus latching on to a proven journalistic success rather than risking scarce capital.

The second is that the 'labour and co-operative movement' would use it as their printers. As many of the political trade unions already have shares in the Co-op Press and shareholders on its board, this seems unlikely – especially as trade union printing requirements are going down with declining membership. Also, according to Michael Banford of the Co-Op Press, 90 per cent of their trade union clients want typesetting and layout services as well as printing, which the PPPS is not planning to offer.

Finally, can the PPPS raise the money? The proposed press is a Goss Headliner offset litho, an American machine distributed in the UK by Rockwell International. To have the capacity to print a labour daily paper, units to the value of about £1 million would have to be bought. Paul Bettison of Rockwell confirms that the plant retains its value so well that it would be regarded as collateral for a loan by finance companies.

As one tenth of original costs of such a press is taken up by transporting and installing the machine, this part of any initial investment does not produce a saleable asset. No machine has yet been ordered and Mr Bettison doubts if one could be installed in less than 15 months from placing an order. Can the *Star*, facing a deficit next year of over £400,000, survive that long? □

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IRELAND

Provos go to Dublin

Mary Holland examines Irish government fears

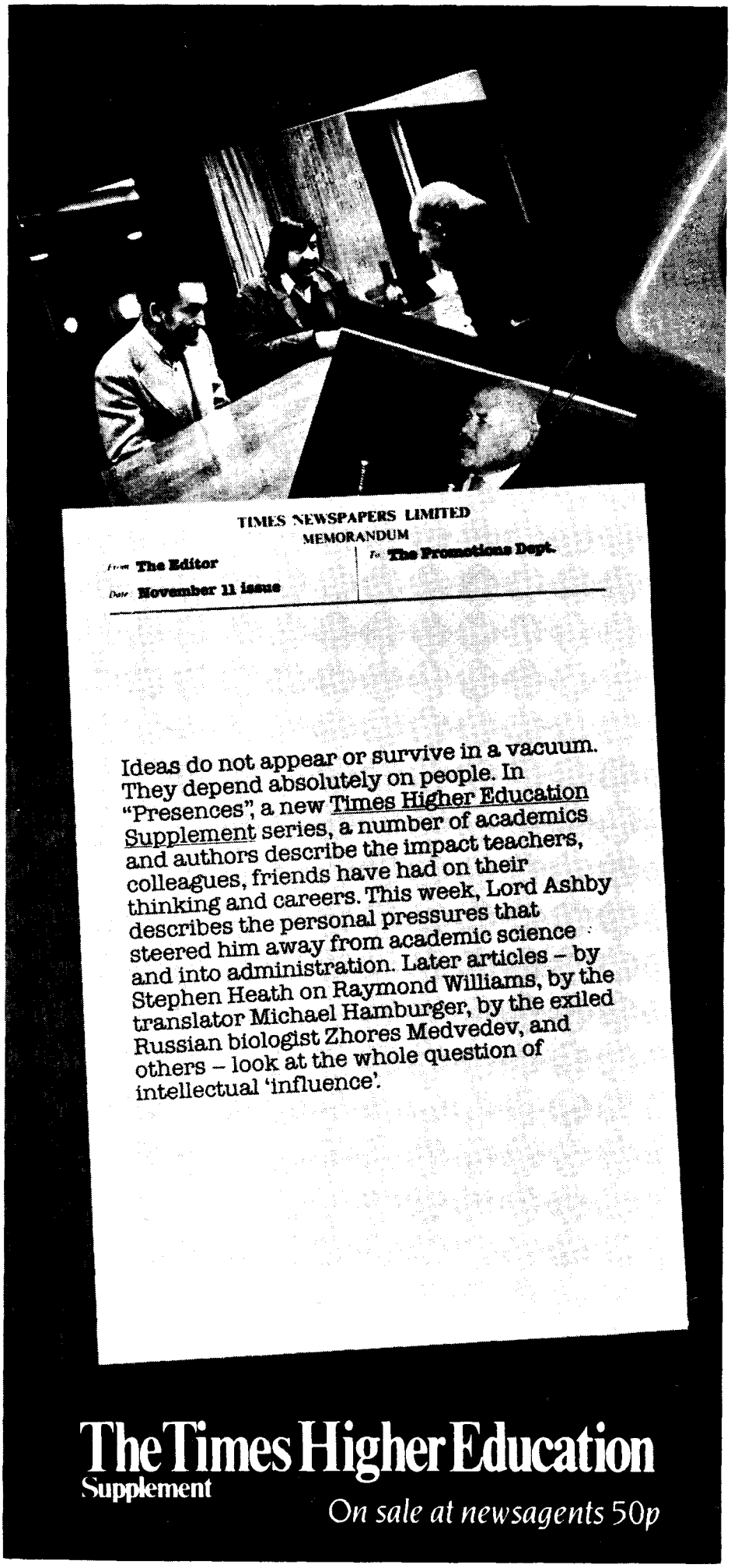
THIS WEEKEND Provisional Sinn Fein holds its annual conference in Dublin, the first since its spectacular success in the British general election when it won 42 per cent of the Catholic vote in Northern Ireland. At this year's conference the emphasis is expected to be more on the ballot box than the Armalite, to adapt the phrase first used by Danny Morrison, one of Sinn Fein's new breed of articulate and politically sophisticated Northern leaders.

The brutal events of the past week have demonstrated that the men with the Armalites are still in business. But this weekend's debates in the Mansion House will show the new confidence which the Provos now bring to the business of Irish politics.

The first tangible evidence of this will come in the campaign Sinn Fein will be running in the Dublin Central parliamentary by-election (caused by the death of the prominent Fianna Fail leader George Colley). Although Gerry Adams is expected to play an active part in the campaign, the issue of Northern Ireland hardly figures in the party's election literature, nor will it be promoted as a central reason why people should vote Sinn Fein. The main thrust of the campaign will be to transfer to a southern context the issues of community politics which the Provos now pursue so enthusiastically in Derry and Belfast.

In fact Sinn Fein has no chance of winning Dublin Central. Privately, the Provos say they will be happy if they can match the vote they won when they ran a candidate in the constituency during the Hunger Strike. But politicians of several parties will be watching with interest to see how they conduct their campaign and how they fare.

On several occasions recently when discussing the political advance of Sinn Fein I have been reminded of the progress of the Liberals during their heyday in cities such as Liverpool. For example, there is today in Dublin an appalling heroin problem. In some working-class areas of the inner city the addiction rate among young teenagers and even children is said to be worse than in Harlem. To deal with the problem of drug pushers a number of working-class communities have taken the law, more or less, into their own hands. One community that I know of has even succeeded in 'persuading' pushers to leave the area. No politicians were involved in this community's initiative and suggestions that they be asked to help were greeted with angry derision. The police, too, were mistrusted and dismissed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as helpless. The only political group which came forward during the many heated meetings to discuss the problem was Provisional Sinn Fein. It was made clear that *they* were available, if asked, to help in persuading known drug pushers to leave that particular small community.

It is unlikely that Dr Garret FitzGerald passed on this piece of socio-political information to Mrs Thatcher during his meeting with her at Chequers last Monday. At the moment Sinn Fein's involvement in the politics of the Republic doesn't loom very large but Dr FitzGerald knows better than most politicians that many of the conditions which have provided a fertile breeding ground for support for Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland also exist in the Republic.

Dr FitzGerald said nothing about the one issue everyone wanted to discuss – whether Mrs Thatcher had indicated how she might respond to the report of the work of the New Ireland Forum due to be published early next year. Mrs Thatcher is said to be alarmed by the intense speculation in the British media that the Forum intends to promote joint sovereignty as a possible solution to the problems of the North. Opposition leader Charles Haughey is understandably annoyed at the emphasis in the British media that all the Forum's constructive work can be put down to Dr FitzGerald's diplomatic skills and that *he* is only waiting in the wings to wreck the whole venture at the first opportunity. The Forum could not have been set up without Mr Haughey's positive encouragement and it is he who has taken the major political risks in engaging in discussions which seem likely to mark a considerable shift away from the traditional Fianna Fail aspiration to a United Ireland.

Dr FitzGerald's determined discretion should not disguise the urgency with which the Irish government now views the situation in the North. From Dublin's point of view the scenario is stark. Unless some political progress can be seen to be made which is credible to the severely alienated Catholic population in Northern Ireland, it will be impossible to stem the flow of support to the Provos and away from the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP).

The first test of this will be the European elections next year when John Hume will compete for the Catholic vote with Sinn Fein's Danny Morrison. No one, not even the Provos, expects Morrison to unseat Hume, but Sinn Fein will be aiming to erode the SDLP leader's enormous personal vote. If that happens, it will have serious implications for the real contest for the hearts and minds of the North's Catholic community, which will come with the local government elections in 1986.

The Irish government's fear is that by then the Provos, with their strong base and impressive record in community politics, could outstrip the SDLP at the polls. The view in Dublin is that the implications of this, for Ireland as a whole, would be very serious indeed. That is the message which Dr FitzGerald was trying to convey to Mrs Thatcher during the unusually long time they spent alone together at Chequers. □

SPENDING CUTS

Phoney figuring

David Blake analyses the basis of Treasury tactics

THIS YEAR, the annual row about public spending cuts has been, by and large, a phoney war. There have been some real cuts – for example, in the NHS. But mainly this time the Treasury is being made to juggle the figures so as to make it seem that spending is being kept inside the targets.

The real battle on public spending does not come until next year. That battle is over the long-term path of government spending, from now until 1990 – that is, well into the life of the *next* government, or what would be Mrs Thatcher's third term. Ever since last summer, the Treasury has been trying to persuade the Cabinet that, unless drastic action is taken now, public spending will rise out of control. There is, in fact, no reason to accept the Treasury's arguments. The public spending 'crisis' of 1990 is based on fake figures and faulty analysis.

At the core of their argument is a paper prepared by government officials in early summer 1982. The mathematics of the Treasury's case are simple. Existing government commitments, it says, mean that spending is bound to grow at about 2¼ per cent a year after allowing for inflation.

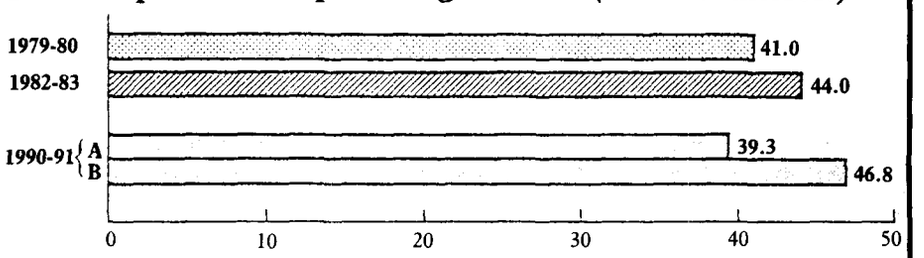
If the economy grows at 2½ per cent a year ('the best we can expect' in the Treasury's view) then public spending would come down gradually until it was only 39.3 per cent of total national output by 1990-91. This is a very sharp drop from the high of 44 per cent to which public spending rose last year, when the figures were drawn up. But it is only a small reduction from 41 per cent, which was the proportion recorded when the government took office in 1979.

But the Treasury says that we cannot count on a 2½ per cent growth rate. The economy, it suggests, is likely to do much worse, possibly growing by only ¾ per cent a year until 1985/6 and by only ½ per cent a year from then until 1990/91. If that happened, they warn, public spending would grow as a share of national output and taxes would have to go through the roof.

The first question is whether public spending on the basis of current policies really will grow at 2¼ per cent a year. Some of the figures which the Treasury uses to prove this are very dubious. For example, although this government's commitment on defence spending is that it should go up by 3 per cent a year, the basic figure which the Treasury has used assumes that it grows by 5 per cent a year, on the argument that the adjustment has to be made in cost terms because defence equipment costs rise faster than other things. Yet there is a clear government policy that this extra upward drift of defence spending should be stopped.

When talking about the 'problem', some ministers also say that taxation is bound to rise unless something is done, because an ever smaller proportion of the population in work will have to support rising numbers of people who do not work because they are too young or too old. It is true that the proportion of the population at work has gone down, but the reason for that is unemployment not demography. In 1991 we shall have no more school children than in 1981 and virtually no more pensioners.

Public expenditure as percentage of GDP (inc. debt interest)



Scenario A: 'high' growth – 2½% a year
Scenario B: stagnation

Source: Confidential Whitehall paper

Those going for the cuts have always assumed the highest level of spending possible, when looking at forecasts. A classic case is housing, where it is asserted (without any evidence) that the government would boost public spending on housing by nearly 60 per cent if the economy did badly. Add up other similarly curious assumptions and, by 1990/91, they come to a pretty sizeable sum – possibly £3,000m to £4,000m, which is equivalent to 3p or 4p in the pound off the standard rate of income tax.

On only one issue is the cost understated. This is unemployment. The assumption that we could have slow growth and still keep unemployment down to only three million by the beginning of the next decade looks absurdly wrong. It would be nearer four million, with nearly £2,000m extra public spending as a result. But admitting this would make the cost of slow growth too obvious, so it is suppressed.

Although the Treasury's figures for spending are exaggerated, it is still probable that on current policies it will grow by something over 1½ per cent a year for the rest of the decade. The question is whether this is

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too much, not enough or just about right.

On a simple point of arithmetic, if the economy as a whole grows by more than public spending (in other words at 1½ per cent or more), then public spending's share in the national output will fall. But even a rising share of total output going to public spending does not mean that private living standards have to fall. That would only happen if the growing sector absorbs more extra resources than the economy as a whole is creating. Because the public sector represents about 44 per cent of the economy, 1 per cent growth in public spending takes up 0.44 per cent of output.

A 1½ per cent growth in public spending would, therefore, absorb roughly ⅔ per cent of higher national output. Any economic growth above that would be available for the private sector and no cuts in spending are needed. For example, if the economy grew at 2½ per cent, private consumption and investment could absorb over 1¾ percentage points of this. This would mean the private sector growing at roughly three times the rate of the public sector. But precisely because this picture provides no support for arguments in favour of massive spending cuts, ministers have been told to ignore it.

Instead, they have been told to concentrate on the gloomier outlook. Just how gloomy this is can be seen from that fact that since 1981 output has already grown by about 4 per cent. Since the scenario assumes only about 6¼ per cent growth over the whole ten years, we have already had two-thirds of the total growth expected for this decade.

Despite this, ministers have been told to prepare for the worst and cut accordingly. Their attention has been concentrated on what are alleged to be the tax consequences of not cutting spending. Even on the Treasury's figures (which as we have seen are doctored to overstate the case) the proportion of the economy accounted for by public spending only goes up by 3 percentage points. So why does the Treasury say this will lead to income tax rates being increased by a half?

The answer is that Treasury forecasts assume that on its most pessimistic projections the gap between spending (about 47 per cent of national output) and taxes (stuck at about 40 per cent of output) is equivalent to 7 per cent of total national output. The big rises in taxes are assumed necessary to cut this gap to around 2 per cent of output – the figure which is thought right to use as a target in a fast growing economy.

The current Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, said during his first stint as a Treasury minister that cutting public borrowing was like going down a staircase. When the economy is in recession, you do not try to cut public borrowing, you just stop it rising. Yet the Treasury's argument for needing drastic spending cuts assumes the exact opposite of this. In the face of a forecast recession lasting for the rest of the decade, it intends to try to cut borrowing to about half its current level. Most economists would see that as deflating your way to disaster.

Why has the Treasury got itself involved in pushing a case so weak that it convinces virtually no independent expert? One answer is that it all began as a much more limited operation. Beneath the grand talk of long-term strategies was a particular problem involving just over half of all public spending – that accounted for by defence (£16 billion) and social security (£32 billion). Together they add up to 54 per cent of all central government spending.

Both of these are largely uncontrollable at present, because they are set by long-term government pledges. Defence spending is guaranteed to grow by 3 per cent a year in real terms until 1985/6: social security is tied to the inflation rate for most benefits.

So far, the Treasury has fought off efforts by Defence to extend the promised 3 per cent growth until 1988/9, the period over which all NATO countries have been asked to aim for 3 per cent growth in defence spending. If it succeeds in evading any such specific pledge this year, it will have won its battle. For, by next year, serious planning for the years after 1985/6 will already be under way and the defence department will be forced to try to get a new commitment to growth instead of persuading people that the old one is automatically extended.

Much more difficult for the government is the question of what to do about social security benefits. Adjusting them for inflation does not increase them in real terms; it just stops their value from falling. If the Chancellor achieves his hope of getting inflation down to zero, he will be forced to cut cash benefits if he wants to cut the total real cost. That remains a very unattractive prospect for a government which relies heavily on pensioners for their votes.

But if the Treasury has secured its limited goals of not allowing any further expansion of defence and social security spending, it looks likely to fail in its longer-term, more ambitious and more political goal. This is to force through massive spending cuts now, so that there can be tax cuts later. All opinion polls show that there is little public support for the idea of heavy cuts in services so that taxes can be cut as a direct result. That is why claiming that there is a public spending crisis is attractive. Cuts are then made to 'prevent' taxes going up. Later it can turn out that the crisis has gone away and then the tax cuts can be wheeled out.

None of this means that governments can afford to increase public spending without limit without having to pay for it. But that simple point provides no basis for abolishing the welfare state, closing our hospitals or selling off the roads. □

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DIARY

More exclusive revelations from 'The Secret Diary of Margaret Hilda Roberts, aged 14¼', as edited by Sue Townsend

FRIDAY: A family of common house sparrows woke me at 4 am. So unable to sleep because of their horrid chirpings I got out of bed and had a brisk wash in disinfectant. Whilst scrubbing my left buttock I found a tiny blue bruise on my normally alabaster skin, caused I thought by last night's friendly pinch from father's friend, Councillor Foulbreath. It wasn't until I was turning my horsehair mattress that I discovered the true cause of my injury, for nestling amongst the rusty springs of my bedstead, I found a dried marrowfat pea! At last! Proof that I am of aristocratic (if not royal) birth! For would a mere pea bruise a commoner?

I am determined on tackling my 'parents' as to the true circumstances surrounding my arrival in Grantham. It was kind of them to take me in, they are good, hardworking, humble folk, and they have done their best for me. But it is time that I was reunited with my own kind.

8pm. Miss Fossedyke has deducted five marks from my Geography essay. In a rare lapse of concentration I had headed my paper 'A day in the life of a Cocoa bean' by Lady Margaret Hilda Roberts of Grantham.

SATURDAY: Asked Mother to tell me where I came from. She stammered and blushed and said, 'I don't rightly know myself, the light was off.'

I asked Father the same question as we were sifting insects from the loose tea leaves. He put down his sieve and said, 'You don't need to know such things until you are a married woman Margaret, and then your husband will inform you.' I said, 'But Father, it is vital for my future happiness that I know.' Then quite out of the blue, he started to shout and rage and asked if Cecil Parkhurst had been hanging around me at the Methodist Youth Club. Baffled, I replied that Cecil had been replaced as Chairman of the Youth Club by John Seldom Gumboil, and I repeated my question. Father stood to his full six feet three and roared: 'Take a cake of coal tar from the shelf and go upstairs and wash your mouth out!' I did as I was told.

SUNDAY: The Porke-Cracklins have moved from the big house. The new tenant is a retired American actor called Ronald Wrinkle. He is reputed to be suffering from a nervous illness and has employed guards to patrol his 70 acres. Señor Grenada, the Porke-Cracklins old Spanish gardener, has been given one tenth of an acre on the far side of the lake in lieu of wages. The Parish Council have given him permission to build a rude hut.

MONDAY: Mrs Arkwright is scandalising Grantham by openly consorting with Señor Grenada. The Arkwright children have been seen digging the tiny garden. Rumour has it that they are building a bedroom extension to the hut.

TUESDAY: Ronald Wrinkle and his patrician wife Nancy appeared in the shop today. Mrs Wrinkle stood in the doorway and said, 'Gee Ronnie, it's like sump'n outa Dickens!' Father bristled slightly as he prides himself that the shop is the most modern in Grantham.

Mr Wrinkle strolled to the Bacon Counter and demanded a case of Automatic Rifles. Father informed Mr Wrinkle that we don't stock firearms. Mr Wrinkle said, 'Well, Limey, s'bout time ya did. Donch'a know 'bout the Arkwright menace within our midst?' Father laughed, thinking that Mr Wrinkle was jesting, but Mr Wrinkle twitched and said, 'Yeah laugh Limey, but when the Arkwrights are in *your* goddamn backyard don't you come a'runnin' to me.' Mrs Wrinkle whispered, 'Honey, your roots are showin'. S'bout time they was treated.' Mr Wrinkle removed a wad of dollar notes from inside his cowboy hat and gave them to his wife, and she purchased 40 tins of Black Cherry Blossom!

ROGER WODDIS

To encourage the others

According to a book published this week, For The Sake of Example, *by Anthony Babington, more than 300 British soldiers were shot during the first world war to persuade nearly a million of their colleagues to fight.*

'When they disgrace the arms they bear,'
Said General Haig before the Somme,
'A young life's neither here nor there.'
Today he would have backed the Bomb.
And rightly so, for who denies
A soldier's kitbag must be filled
With chocolate and a pack of lies,
If Tommy's to be tamely killed?

The generals then were back at base,
Now everyone is under fire,
And women who should know their place
Are cutting through protective wire.
There is a storm before the lull,
When those who dare to break the line
Will get a bullet in the skull
From Hauptmannführer Heseltine.

We shall go not cold,
As they that are Left go cold:
Rage shall not weaken us,
Nor a requiem.
At their running down of the *Sun*
And in their mourning
We will dismember them.

Father warned Mr Wrinkle about taking the law into his own hands regarding evicting Señor Grenada. The American only snarled. 'I'm the biggest landowner in these here parts Roberts, and I make the law.' Several unshaven men wearing sunglasses burst into the shop. One shouted: 'I gotta snapshot that shows beanpole erections in Grenada's vegetable patch boss.' Wrinkle pored over the photograph, then said, 'Yeah, it's beanpoles alright. Ya know what to do boys.' Then the whole lot of them clanked out, spurs jingling, and got into a vulgar pink car and drove off at speed knocking Gormless Howe, the village idiot, down. He *will* stand in the middle of the road, so it is entirely his own fault.

WEDNESDAY: Mr Wrinkle's men have stormed Mr Grenada's tenth of an acre, pulled his beanpoles out and captured the whole Arkwright family. The Town Council held an emergency meeting at the Bacon Slicer. Constable Perkins was sent to investigate. He returned saying that Mr Wrinkle had acted in the best interests of the ratepayers of Grantham. Apparently the beanpoles were catapult launchers, and were aimed at Mr Wrinkle's greenhouse windows!

THURSDAY: The wretched Arkwrights have been forcibly returned to their hovel in Railway Cuttings, but nobody has seen Señor Grenada since his one tenth of an acre was turned into a garage for the pink car.

Constable Perkins tried to change a one hundred dollar bill at the bank today. I know because I heard Nigel Lawless, the bank manager, telling Mother as he purchased his weekly 3lb bag of glacé cherries. Mother watched Mr Lawless waddle out of the shop, then laughed into her apron and said, 'Talk about giving pigs cherries!' But Father heard her, and said, 'You know the rules, Mother; no laughter in the shop.'

Gormless Howe is on the danger list at the Cottage Hospital, he is not expected to last.

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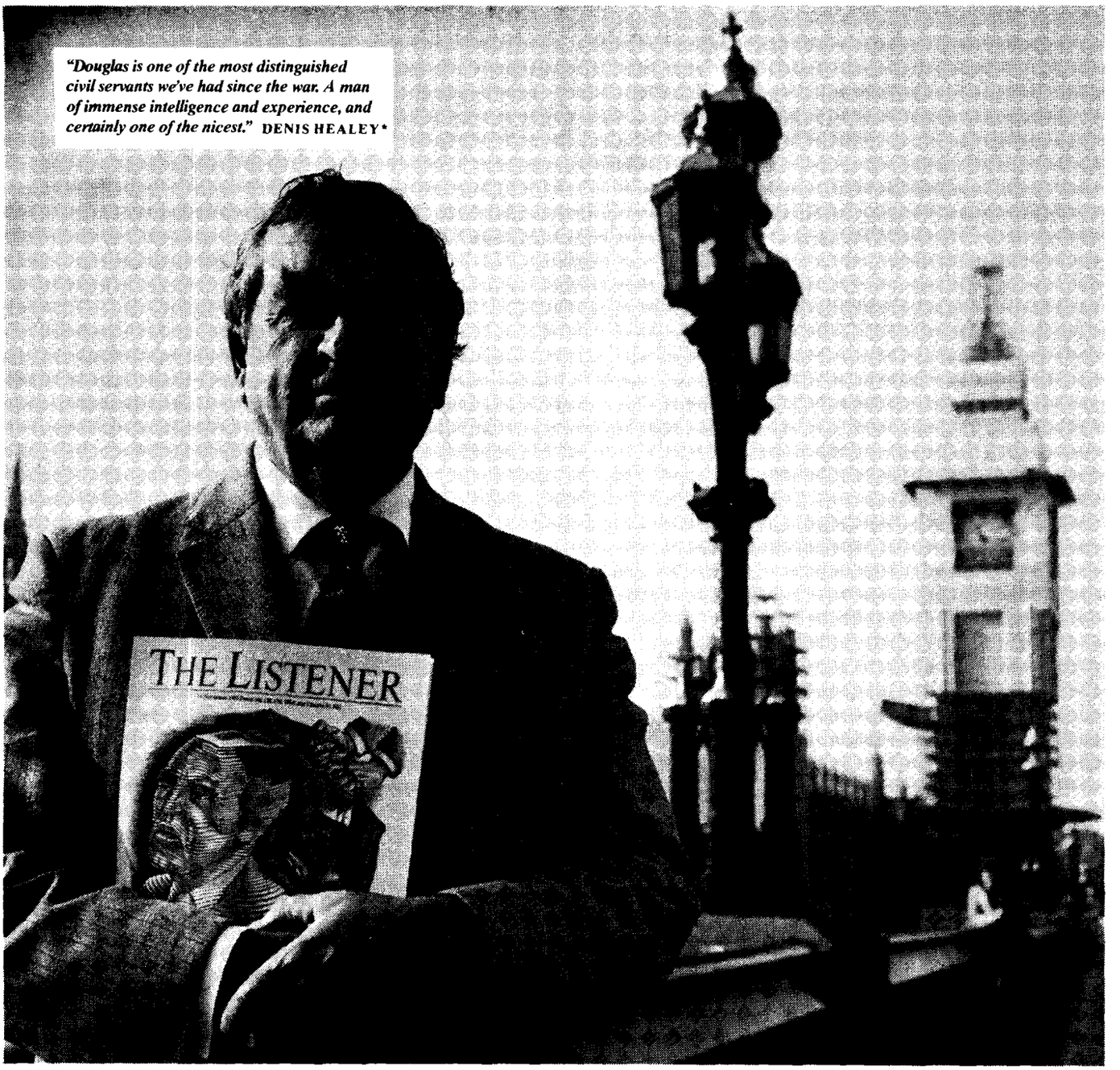
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Butterfly on a wheel

John Pilger reports on how 'the most imaginative and compassionate and hopeful revolution' is withstanding a peculiarly ruthless US destabilisation

Q: Mr President, have you approved of covert activity to destabilise the present government of Nicaragua?

A: Well, no, we're supporting them, the – oh, wait a minute, wait a minute, I'm sorry, I was thinking of El Salvador, because of the previous, when you said Nicaragua. Here again, this is something upon which the national security interests, I just – I will not comment.

President Reagan's press conference, February 1983

WHY IS THERE almost a silence over what is being done to Nicaragua? Is not the invasion of Grenada a forerunner of worse in Nicaragua? Are the 1960s and early 1970s so obsolete now that even those who cared about what was done to Vietnam and Chile have become suppliants of a 'consensus' and its bogus 'balanced view' of Them and Us, of good in the guise of 'the West' perennially threatened by an evil of collapsing 'dominoes', as if nations are mere blocks of wood?

Nicaragua, the most imaginative and compassionate and hopeful revolution in any society for a generation, is being assaulted in full public view and those responsible are being allowed to get away with it. Not only are they being allowed to get away with it, with barely a whimper from the self-declared democracies, but they are supported in this 'regional enterprise', as Henry Kissinger would describe it, by a British government whose mendacity is no longer constricted by Whitehall-speak. For several weeks now the Foreign Office has distributed a remarkable 'briefing paper' which says that Nicaragua is 'importing huge quantities of Soviet-made military equipment', that the Sandinistas are 'fast taking the country down a totalitarian path, regardless of the wishes of the majority of the people', and that an 'anti-Government campaign by left-wing guerrillas' has led to the deaths of up to 19,000 innocent civilians in El Salvador in two years.

None of those statements is true. Considering the proven case against the régime-inspired death squads in El Salvador, the last lie is of Goebbels stature. 'Unless you can provide indisputable evidence to prove otherwise', wrote Baroness Young, Foreign Office Minister, in an apologia to Lord Chitnis, 'I see no reason to have the paper withdrawn'. Since 1980 the human rights organisation of the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador has documented murders and torture by death squads and 'security forces'. Their research has been acknowledged as meticulous; their figure is 35,000 murders. The Foreign Office paper is entitled 'Crisis in Central America', yet, inexplicably, it does not include Guatemala where, in a four-year period, 5,000 people have been murdered by death squads and, reports Amnesty International, the bodies were 'piled up in ravines, dumped at roadsides or buried in mass graves . . . death had come to most by strangling with a garotte, by being suffocated in rubber hoods or being shot in the head'. In 1954, in a 'regional enterprise' similar to that now under way in Nicaragua, the CIA extinguished the last popular, elected reformist government in Guatemala. The garotted bodies in the ravine almost 30 years later are the continuing result of that 'enterprise'; and not even the Foreign Office is able to convert that truth to the promotion of 'peace, democracy and economic reform', which is how it describes American policies in Central America.

John Pilger's documentary, Nicaragua: A nation's right to life, *will be shown on ITV next Tuesday night, 15 November, at 10.30. It is directed by Alan Lowery and researched by Elizabeth Nash.*

Central America is that small shadow on the planet denied a history of its own, the epic struggles of its people and their heroes lost behind a facade of ridicule: the 'banana republics'. Who knew, for example, about the peasants' uprising in El Salvador in 1932 in which 30,000 people were massacred with the complicity of the United States? Or of the bombing of the town of Ocotal in Nicaragua in 1923 by De Havilland aircraft of the US Marines, an action now believed to be the first organised dive bombing of civilians, more than a decade before the Germans were credited with the innovation at Guernica?

Central America is where 'doctrines', from Monroe to Reagan, have bound economies to high profit cash crops and to fickle commodity markets and where malnourished children die from diseases like haemorrhagic measles – the most horrific disease imaginable, where blood comes out of every orifice. They die from it in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. And they died from it in Somoza's Nicaragua. So much of that has changed in the Nicaragua I saw. Polio has gone completely. Infant mortality has been cut by a third. Life expectancy has risen. Production and consumption of basic foods is up by as much as 100 per cent. A literary campaign, spectacular by any standards, has reduced the illiteracy rate from more than half the population to less than 10 per cent. In El Regadio, for example, an isolated community in the north, 87 peasant people, mostly middle-aged women, have learned to read and write, many of them in an elegant hand. Here, there used to be a word *pobreterria*, for which there is no precise translation. 'It is the equivalent of people calling themselves the scum of the earth,' I was told. 'It was a view of ourselves based on shame, on knowing that things could never change. The word is now extinct.'

Like every large village in Nicaragua, El Regadio has a new health centre, giving special care to mothers and babies. (The population is disproportionately female. Some 50,000 died fighting Somoza, most of them young men, about the same number as died fighting for America in Vietnam: the difference being that Nicaragua has a population of less than three million.) Celestina Ugarto was a midwife here; a woman given new skills in her fifties, she was loved and respected. Last year she was abducted by a gang of former Somoza National Guard, the accredited torturers known now as the *Contra*, who are paid, armed, trained and directed by the CIA in camps in Honduras. Four other midwives were murdered by the *Contra*.

On the morning I drove into the valley, Julio Moncarda, the regional director of agrarian reform, was ambushed on the same road by a CIA gang and shot to death; he was unarmed. Like most of the Sandinistas in charge of eradicating the legacies of Somoza, he was in his early thirties. People wept when we told them of his death; two days later the town of Estili stopped for his funeral and thousands of people hummed his name. Some 500 have been murdered by those terrorists enjoying the dollars of American taxpayers, the patronage of the United States President and the support of the British Prime Minister and her Minister of State.

By contrast, the American ambassador to Nicaragua, Anthony Quainton, strolls in safety through Managua to visit his barber, or to indulge his hobby of amateur dramatics. The respect and generosity he receives is of the same spirit which raised a memorial in an impoverished *barrio* to Bill Stewart, the American TV reporter murdered by the National Guard in the last days of Somoza. 'To Bill Stewart', it says, 'he did not die on foreign soil and we keep his memory alive because he is part of free Nicaragua.' It is of the same spirit which allows foreigners, any

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Susan Meiselas/Magnum

Women and children of the Salisa resettlement camp attending one of the new government health centres

foreigners, to drive across Nicaragua and encounter neither roadblocks nor menace from within, only helpful people and shy soldiers to whom it is a pleasure to give a lift.

Contrast that with the absurd motorcades of steel which convey the American ambassadors in El Salvador and Guatemala among their respective 'allies'; and with the soldiers in those countries for whom you instinctively thrust your arms to the sky; and with the lists of names in the San Salvador newspapers of those found murdered, headless and otherwise mutilated, on rubbish tips, or in the forecourt of a McDonald's. In Nicaragua under the Sandinistas not a single case of torture has been substantiated. 'There have been individual cases of ill-treatment by security officials,' says Amnesty, 'but these have been punished by the Nicaraguan authorities'. That alone distinguishes the Nicaraguan revolution from the French, American, Russian and, more recently, the Iranian revolution.

THE SANDINISTAS began by abolishing the death penalty. They then set free 2500 National Guardsmen and, in doing so, angered many Nicaraguans who had lost loved ones to the Guard's boundless brutality. An independent human rights organisation was set up and is reviewing the evidence against all those imprisoned. 'Consider our dilemma', said Tomas Borge, the only survivor of the original founders of the *Frente de Liberacion Sandinista*, and now the Interior Minister. 'The more humane our ideals the higher the price we must pay. How many of those of Somoza's private army we let go went straight to the border and joined up with the CIA?' Borge took me and my Central TV colleagues to Tipitapa prison where, under Somoza, he was kept naked, hooded and half starved; 'so much so that I welcomed the return of the torturer'.

Borge, perhaps because of what he endured, is something of a national hero. A stocky, sardonic man with a considerable ego, he strode among the prisoners, seeking complaints. One man claimed to be a distant relative of his. 'So what do you want?' said Borge. 'To visit my mother, Commandante,' said the man. They negotiated this proposal like veteran salesmen until the man had won a brief freedom for the following Monday. 'This fellow here', said Borge, 'he would scrape off the skin of his victims . . . and this is the murderer of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the owner of *La Prensa*.' The relative absence of tension in the prison could not have been contrived for us. When we asked to be left on our own, we were left on our own. The same happened at Granja Abierta open prison where Somoza's personal bodyguard, described as 'an almost rehabilitated brute', works on a farm without fences and within sight of the main road: an example of penal reform admired in Britain and Scandinavia. In four years, said the ex-brute, only one man had chosen to escape.

Not repeating the 'mistakes' of the Cubans, for whom Nicaraguans feel a genuine affection, is an undeclared article of faith. There is no State farm monopoly as there is in Cuba. An individual can own as much land as he can work: that is, as long as he produces, re-invests and pays union-agreed wages. The law says that you are subject to having your land taken over only if you have 850 acres lying idle. 'Fortunately,' I was told, 'Somoza owned so much land that taking it over was a universally popular move. We were able to divide it quickly and partly satisfy the yearning of people for land.' According to critics on the Left in Nicaragua, the *Frente Obrero*, the yearning has not been satisfied and the Sandinistas have been much too cautious. Indeed, in President Reagan's 'Marxist-Leninist' nightmare most of the principal export crops, such as cotton, coffee and beef, remain in private hands. Private owners are encouraged to accept loans offering interest rates well below commercial rates: 13 per cent for individuals and 8 per cent for co-operatives: the latter being the revolution's ideal which, as British visitors are constantly reminded, 'began in Rochdale, didn't you know? . . . the Toad Lane Co-op it was . . . 1844'.

Guillermo Selva Arguello is general secretary of the National Liberal Party which is part of a broad alliance sharing government with the Sandinistas, and, he says, 'of the David Steel tradition'. 'The Sandinistas' mistake,' he said, 'was not calling elections immediately after the revolution. They would have had 90 per cent of people with them and that would have been their answer to the United States. Instead they have chosen a fastidious, time-consuming exploration of every electoral system in the world, it seems, to find one for Nicaragua. Some of their popularity has worn away with time and the pressures of the siege, but there is no question they have the majority with them'.

A priest such as Xabier Gorostiaga is almost incredulous about the American disregard for the complexities of change in its hemisphere. A Jesuit economist, he runs the Institute of Economic and Social Research. 'So *we* are Marxist-Leninist, are we?' he mocked. 'When the North Americans reduce our uniqueness to a jargon they them-

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selves do not understand, they deny the power of our nationalism. Augusto Sandino himself was not in any way "anti-North American". Nor did he know about Karl Marx. He was a *nationalist*. Marxism is embraced here in a variety of ways, but by far the most powerful influence here is Christianity and our Indian heritage. In Nicaragua to be Christian can mean you have a *real* option for the poor. This has caused a dramatic division in the church. It's not a theological division; it's a social and political division and it's between the hierarchy and the people, between those who pontificate and wish to control and those who see the logical *Christian* extension of pastoral work as being with the people, *fighting for them if necessary!'* I asked what side the Pope was on? 'Ah the Pope . . .' he said. 'He is with the poor of Poland!' The bitterness about the Pope in this deeply religious land is extraordinary. He prays for the leadership of every country he visits, they say; he even prayed for the regime of General Jaruszelski in Poland and for the murderous regime of El Salvador, but he refused to pray for a Nicaraguan government which has four priests in its cabinet. In Nicaragua the United States is doing to the Sandinistas precisely what the Russians have done to Solidarity. Such irony perhaps eludes the Pope.

'Why,' I asked Xabier Gorostiaga, 'does President Reagan call you communists?' 'For Mr Reagan,' he replied, 'Christianity is meant merely to legitimise the established power. It has no other role. The Vatican has always been with big capital, big institutions, big *power*. Now if the church starts legitimising the poor and the independence of small countries, it becomes a subversive force. Archbishop Romero of El Salvador stood up and preached that the poor had a right to a better life. In the eyes of Washington and the Vatican, he became a subversive; a communist. And he was shot. What to do?'

Susan Meiselas/Magnum

The children of Lupita Reyes Montiel by the grave of their murdered brother

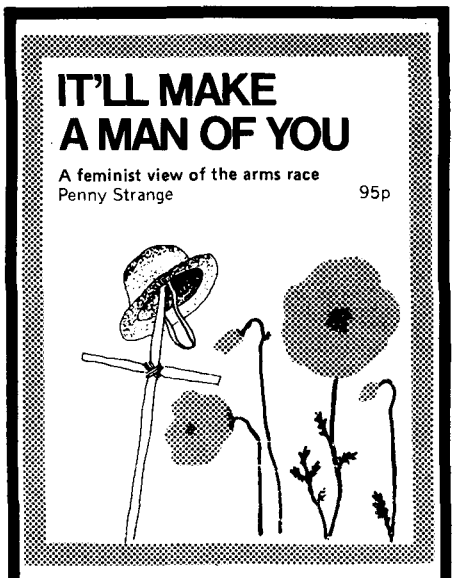
THE CIA's 'secret war' against Nicaragua now includes the despatch of 4,000 US combat troops to Honduras. The Sandinistas' 'war machine', to use Reagan's words, consists of 45 T-54 and T-55 old Soviet-made tanks (which were built for use on the north German plains not in dense tropical terrain), anti-aircraft batteries, 22,000 regular troops, reserves and a militia. The Nicaraguan Air Force 'strike command' consists of three American Korean War vintage T-28s, two of them flown by a dapper Chilean with a honed sense of humour. 'I am ready,' he told me at a party in Managua, 'to take on the US Air Force. I am the pigeon attacking the buckshot!' (This revolution has its own Woody Allens. Tomas Borge told *Playboy* that the Sandinista leadership had been seriously trying to get copies of *Bedtime for Bonzo*. 'The movie deals with a monkey', said Borge, 'and the monkey's master is Reagan. So this is a wonderful allegory . . . almost a premonition!')

Laughter does not apply in the home of Lupita Reyes Montiel. Beneath her small dirt garden lies one son, Julio, whom she herself buried, having carried his tortured body back from the lines of Somoza's guardsmen during the 'final offensive' in the summer of 1979. Her other son, Manuel, 'simply disappeared'. From the *barrio*, where Lupita lives, there are white crosses at the roadside all the way to the Bank of America and the Intercontinental Hotel, the only tall buildings left standing after the 1972 earthquake – Somoza having stolen the millions he received in emergency aid and loans. The white crosses mark fallen victims of both the earthquake and of the struggle against a dynasty which owned almost half the arable land and the national airline and the sewers, right up to the manhole covers, and the paving stones in the roads. Of the first Somoza, President Roosevelt said: 'He may be a son of a bitch, but he's *our* son of a bitch.' Of the last Somoza President Nixon said: 'He's the kind of anti-communist we like to see down there.'

Lupita's sons, the white crosses and the razed city represent loss and sacrifice of an almost incomprehensible order, which people seem to know is coming again, as if the 'triumph' of 19 July 1979 was a dream, as if the 'luck' in the lines of Bertholt Brecht has now forsaken the Sandinistas – 'By chance I was spared. If my luck leaves me, I am lost.' Knowing this, the Sandinistas have become hoarse with offers to negotiate, including an immediate and unconditional non-aggression pact with Honduras, but their position is becoming untenable, because their 'threat' to the United States administration is a real one.

It is the threat of a unique example: the example of a society inspired by neither the United States nor the Soviet Union. That is why the administration is not interested in talking and why it is now all beyond the facade; Americanism under Reagan is not a sales pitch; it is an ideology rampant, with a monomania. 'So obsessed is the Reagan administration with Central America,' wrote Charles Maechling in the current issue of *Foreign Policy* in Washington, 'that it has not hesitated to twist through redefinition the meaning of human rights in order to downgrade the most basic right of all, the right of life. Its acquiescence in patterns of torture, murder and other forms of state terrorism . . . comes close to condoning the kind of crimes against humanity condemned at the Nuremberg war crimes trials.'

Remaining silent, we might remind ourselves, came close to achieving the same ends. □



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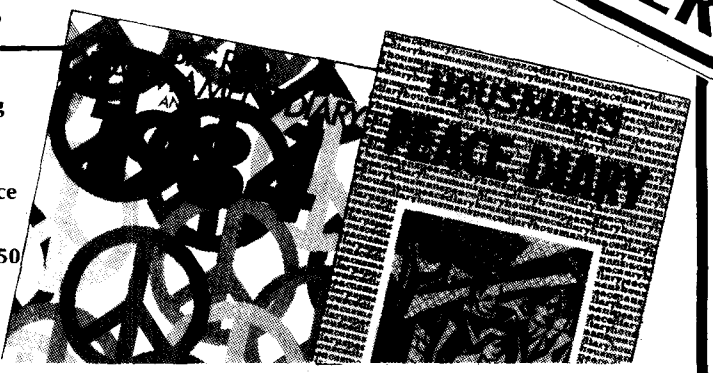

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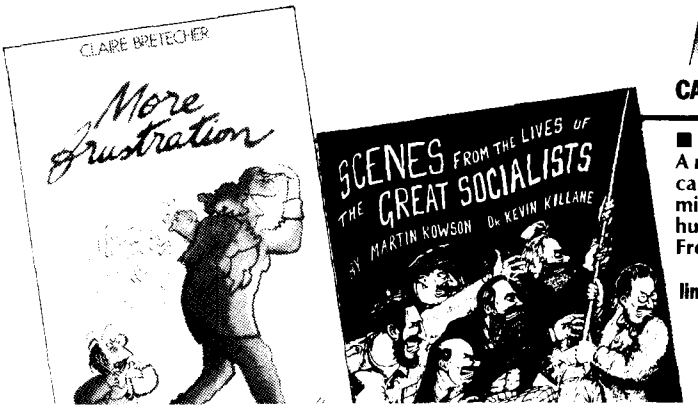

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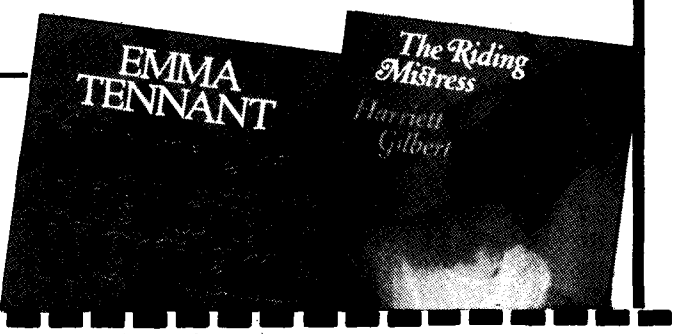

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GRENADA

Deserted Island

Peter Pringle on the hypocrisy of British policy

Grenada

IT BOGGLES the mind to learn, in this age of satellites and microwave communications, that the Foreign Office's outpost in Grenada does not even own a telex machine. But so it was, when Whitehall wanted to send word of the US invasion to our man in Grenada, John Kelly, that the coded message – a jumble of letters, figures, question and exclamation marks – came clattering over the telex of the office *above* him: an office run by the Organization of American States.

I mention this not to suggest any security breach – Mr Kelly was the only one with access to the relevant codebook – but as a symbol of the pathetic nature of the Foreign Office's (and therefore Mrs Thatcher's) concern about events in Grenada prior to the invasion. The really depressing aspect of this lack of concern is that it is as widespread in the Caribbean and Central America as revolutions and *coups d'etat*.

In its desperation about Grenada, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) was forced to turn to the US. For the moment, the US is, as one diplomat put it, 'the big good wolf'. This definition might be a bit ambivalent for the Americans, who are so obsessed with being liked – especially in countries they have just invaded – that the CBS television company conducted a popularity poll in Grenada ten days after the Marines attacked. Not surprisingly, in the atmosphere of fear and confusion following the invasion, 91 per cent said that they were glad to see the Americans.

Grenadians also readily complained about the Cubans (they didn't speak our language and they fucked our goats) and communism (we didn't like having to attend all those classes on Marx and Lenin) and the thugs who murdered Bishop. For Bishop himself, however, there are few bad words. In part, this is the 'one-manism' of West Indian politics – 'Look man,' said Peter James, a 22-year-old unemployed clerk, 'if you are nice to a Grenadian, he will love you quick, quick, quick. If you yourself would like to be Prime Minister here, you could be if you are nice to us. Ronald Reagan has been nice to us, he could also be Prime Minister.'

But also, after Bishop's death, many Grenadians feared that General Austin, the ringleader of the violent coup, would kill again. As Peter James put it, 'I believe we were going into a gutter without any way out. To many, Ronald Reagan offered the prospect of jobs and prosperity – even perhaps a visa to America. But we also know that if the Americans invest $20 million here, they will want $100 million back. The money won't stay in Grenada.'

THERE IS SOME confusion here. How does one tally the support and mourning for Bishop with the fulsome welcome for Reagan? Invading armies, we know, are often met by flag-waving crowds, but the Grenadians weren't waving flags when the Marines came in. Rather, they were obviously stunned by the sheer force of the invasion: 5,000 men (one for every 20 Grenadians); the sky dotted permanently with noisy helicopters and even noisier fighter bombers; the tiny roads clogged with soldiers, jeeps and trucks; the infamous British and Cuban-built 9,000-foot runway at Point Salines cluttered with C-130 transports.

It is perhaps also helpful to see the Grenadians' enthusiasm in the light of what has been called their 'cultural ambidextrousness'. In days gone by, young Grenadians who aspired to enter the European-colonial kingdom often did so by discarding any loyalty to colour, creed or class. As Patrick Emmanuel, a sociologist of the University of the West Indies, observes, 'They could portray the culture of the elite or of the mass as the circumstances warranted.'

When Grenadians from the emergent middle classes succeeded, as the West Indian political scientist C. L. R. James put it, in 'crawling or worming their way into recognition by government or big business', they quickly found how impotent they were. But that was before Independence and Grenada's attempt at a socialist revolution – something of which has remained. Peter James learned to be cynical about the American profit motive and the aims of the invasion during the Bishop years.

Outside the capital St George's other, less thoughtful, opinions are heard. The Charles family, for example, work the fish-filled waters off the south-western tip of the island. 'God bless America', they cried in unison. 'All of them (members of the Bishop and Austin government) was wicked'. Never mind that, for the last four years, Washington has done its damnedest to make sure that a socialist Grenada got no foreign aid at all; or that, when elections are held next year, it may not approve of the new government. It might not be the 'suitable' administration that Major Douglas Frey, of the 82nd Airborne, told journalists was what the American troops had come to install.

Actually, the first civilian official to arrive on Grenada to help put the new government together was not American, but British. As I left Grenada a strange figure appeared on the tarmac. He was wearing a pale suit over a blue pinstriped shirt and sporting, in his breast pocket, an overflowing grey silk handkerchief the same colour as his shoes. He introduced himself as Antony Redfern Rushford, recently arrived from London and now appointed legal adviser to the Governor-General of Grenada, Sir Paul Scoon.

'The situation is this', he began, by way of explaining his presence. 'At the top is the Queen – that is, the Queen in her capacity as Queen of Grenada. Below her is Sir Paul Scoon and then,' and he drew a big open box in mid air and punched his fist through it, 'there is a big gaping hole. That is where I come in and, if you want any help after hours, I'm not averse to a tipple.' God help Grenada, I thought, as I walked off the tarmac into the boiling hot belly of the C-130. The British are back. □

THIS ENGLAND

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□ A 51-year-old man who has spent 35 years in mental hospitals, 30 of them in Moss Side, Liverpool's top security hospital, can return to the outside world, a Mental Health Tribunal has ruled. Peter Wilson's crime was that as a teenager he stole a bicycle and broke into a beach hut. – *Daily Telegraph* (Brenda Rowe).

□ The council is to move to stop a Bolton Road restaurant using their garden area as part of their food and bar facilities following complaints about noise – from a neighbouring centre for the hard of hearing. – *Eastbourne Post* (Paul Morris).

FAR EAST

Travels with Ronnie

Jon Halliday reviews the aims of Reagan's tour

AS RONALD REAGAN embarks on his East Asia tour this week, he may count himself lucky to have anyone at all to visit. Originally designed as a grand swing round the local allies, the trip had to be cut in half after Philippines opposition leader Aquino was rather too blatantly murdered on the Manila tarmac where Reagan himself would have trod. As it is, both of Reagan's hosts, Chon Doo Hwan in South Korea and Yasuhiro Nakasone in Japan, are in precarious positions. Chon is only alive at all because of an apparent fluke in missing last month's bomb in Rangoon. And Nakasone has a premature election in the offing because of his inability to break his links to his mentor, convicted criminal ex-premier Tanaka.

The Reagan Administration, with its strong California component, has pushed a 'Pacific first' approach much more powerfully than is often recognised in Europe. Not only has trans-Pacific trade overtaken trans-Atlantic trade, but the North-West Pacific area has become a key zone for the US-led military build-up against the USSR. Unlike in Europe, however, there is as yet no NATO-like organisation. Rather, the US has *exclusive* and strong bilateral military ties to the individual countries.

In Japan, Reagan has three main goals. First, to pressure Tokyo into upping its military expenditure and taking a much

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more active role in the great anti-Soviet crusade. Second, to bolster the personal standing of premier Nakasone, whom Reagan regards as a buddy (he calls him 'Yasu') and, as was uncomfortably clear at the recent Williamsburg summit, a useful lever against the vacillating Europeans. Third, to put on at least a good show of trying to get Japan to lessen its huge (1982: $20 billion) trade deficit with the US.

Organisationally, the alliance with Japan appeals to US policy-makers, especially in the Pentagon, for the very good reason that the US is unencumbered by other allies. The US, which recently got Japan to agree for the first time to the word 'alliance' to describe the US-Japan relationship, is now pushing for greater integration of Japan as a kind of 'Asian-Pacific unit' of the Western alliance. A second reason why Japan appears such an attractive ally to the US is that there is a fairly large pool of anti-Sovietism in Japan, kept alive by a campaign to reverse the frontier decisions reached after World War II.

The US wants Japan to increase its military spending. But this demand is fraudulently presented to the public. Both Japan and the US claim that Japanese military spending is less than 1 per cent of GNP, when in fact (by NATO criteria) it is about 1.8 per cent. And Japan already has the eighth strongest armed forces in the world (in spite of a Constitution flatly banning all such forces). Under new US-Japan agreements, Japan is to take over responsibility for patrolling the sea lanes up to 1,000 nautical miles from Tokyo. In particular, the US is trying to get Japan to take responsibility for blocking the 'choke points', the three straits which provide egress for the Soviet fleet based at Vladivostok: the Tsushima (or Korea) Straits between Japan and Korea; the Tsugaru Strait between the Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido; and the Soya (or La Perouse) Strait between Japan and the USSR.

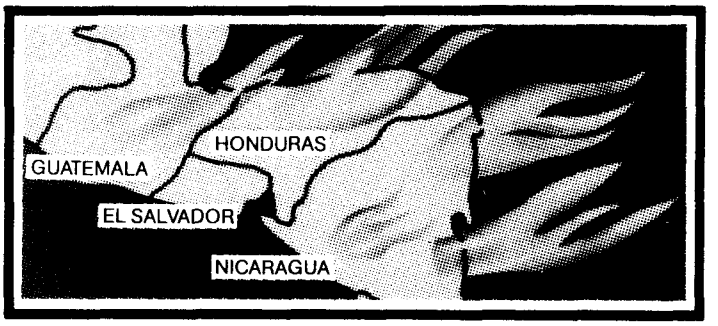
SOUTH KOREA is Reagan's kind of country: a military dictatorship with a sustained level of anti-Communist rhetoric that is music to his hearing aid. For someone with a penchant for gloating and revenge, events have conspired to serve up a feast of issues: starting with the downing of KAL 007 and the Rangoon bomb incident. White House speechwriters can hardly ever have hoped for a better target than North Korea's Kim Il Sung.

Reagan has a strong personal commitment to Chon, who was the first president invited to the White House after Reagan took office. And Chon is the only foreign president who made his career fighting for the Americans (in Vietnam). But his position inside Korea is shaky. About half of his top civilian officials were killed in Rangoon and his predecessor was killed, apparently at the height of his power, by the head of his own CIA. The economy is still rocky after these shocks, while major banking and financial scandals have reached right into the president's family, endangering Chon's carefully constructed facade as the Confucian-style 'wise and trusted helmsman'.

The reason for this lies in the unique responsibility of the US in Korea. Not only are there some 40,000 US military personnel in Korea, with some 700-1,000 nuclear weapons, but the entire South Korean armed forces of over 600,000 men are under *direct* US command. When the Kwangju uprising broke out in May 1980 it was the US which gave permission for Chon's paratroopers to storm the city where they killed hundreds of civilians (some say about 3,000), many with unspeakable cruelty (women had their breasts cut off by bayonets in public; many detainees were tortured to death). This could not just be explained away as a client 'getting out of hand': these were troops *under US command*.

Sitting in Europe, it is easy to forget that north-east Asia is in many ways the most complex geo-strategic spot on the globe. Not only is it where the USSR and the US are geographically closest (12 miles at the Bering Straits), but the USSR faces a daunting array of potential opponents, including four of the five largest armies in the world (apart from its own): those of the US, South Korea, China and Taiwan. Weinberger's visit to China in September showed that China will go a long way to tie itself to US military technology – even so far as trying to help Reagan get re-elected by inviting him to China next year. □

THE AGONY OF CENTRAL AMERICA



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HUNGARY

Behind the scenes

Bill Lomax on a family torn apart by Kádár's 'liberal' regime

HUNGARY HAS recently become a pet of the Western press. Even the *Daily Telegraph* speaks of the Kádár regime as having a good human rights record. The case of Sándor Lichtenstein throws some doubt on this claim.

It was a few days after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 that Sándor and I first met. I was hitching a lift out of Budapest with a Polish friend to visit the wine cellars at Eger in north-east Hungary, when a jeep of construction workers and engineers stopped to pick us up. As so often in Hungary, the conversation soon turned to 1956. When I explained that I was hoping to write a book about the revolution, it transpired that one of the engineers had been imprisoned for his activities as a member of the revolutionary committee of Ujpest, a working-class suburb to the north of Budapest.

Sándor had been arrested, on 13 November 1956, in the town hall of Ujpest – where he had gone to take part in a meeting called to establish a Central Workers' Council. In 1959, after two and a half years in jail, he was put on trial with 32 fellow members of the Ujpest Committee. Ten of them, including Sándor, were sentenced to death. He was one of the lucky three to be reprieved and have his sentence commuted to life imprisonment. In 1963, he was released under a general amnesty.

By 1968, Sándor appeared to be benefiting from the more liberal regime, inaugurated after years of terror and repression. He was married to a young schoolteacher, Ibolya, and they had two children, Judit and Imre. He had a good job as a civil engineer and he and his wife were buying their own flat. He was not involved in political activity and the regime no longer seemed to hold his past against him.

So it seemed until several years later, in 1979, when I received an anguished letter from Sándor. His wife and children had left Hungary on a tourist trip and decided not to return. Sándor was naturally concerned. It transpired that they had first sought political asylum in West Germany, and then, in 1980, received permission to settle in Canada, where they have lived ever since. They are now in the final stages of applying for Canadian citizenship.

In 1981, Sándor applied for permission to leave Hungary and join his family. The Canadian authorities agreed that he could settle there. He completed all the necessary medicals, got the required approval from his employer and clearance from the Hungarian military and financial authorities. The Hungarian government, however, rejected his application, on the grounds that his travelling abroad would be 'against the public interest'.

Repeated appeals in 1981 and 1982, including a personal appeal to the Minister of Interior, were refused with the same explanation. His latest appeal was made on 23 October 1982, the anniversary of the 1956 revolution. He was summoned to the Ministry of Interior on 4 November (the anniversary of the Soviet invasion) to be told that his case was now finally closed.

Sándor Lichtenstein: still not forgiven?

At this point, representations were made to the Hungarian authorities in both Britain and Canada. In Britain, his case was taken up by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and the former Foreign Secretary David Owen. They were both told that his case could be re-examined only if he submitted a new application.

In 1983, Sándor again completed the required procedures for his emigration. Now, he was more hopeful, in the knowledge that his case was known about outside Hungary. But once again, on 15 August 1983, his request was rejected. His travelling abroad would be 'against the public interest'. A few weeks later, the Hungarian government was a signatory to the Closing Document of the talks on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Madrid, which included an express commitment to the cause of family reunification.

Many commentators suggest that the present 'liberal' regime in Hungary has realised the main demands of the 1956 revolution. When the present Hungarian leader, János Kádár, came to power as the head of a government imposed on the country by Soviet tanks on 4 November 1956, he declared that his aim was to suppress the counter-revolutionaries, but not the workers and young people who had joined in the revolution as 'honest patriots who wanted the further democratisation of our economic and social life'. He even promised that his government would 'not tolerate the persecution of workers under any pretext' for having taken part in the revolution.

Kádár has now been in power longer than any twentieth-century ruler of Hungary. It is a sad reflection on the achievements of his regime that it should still bear such a grudge against those of its citizens who fought for their freedom in 1956, and that it should see fit to deny an honest worker, like Sándor Lichtenstein, the most elementary human right: to be reunited with his wife and children. □

Mr Altaf Gauhar: an apology

Settlement of a High Court action brought by Mr Altaf Gauhar against the *New Statesman* and the then Editor was announced last week. Mr Gauhar is an experienced Pakistani journalist. He edits the journal *Third World Quarterly* and is Editor-in-Chief of the magazine *South* and was formerly Co-Editor of the *Guardian Third World Review*.

In the *New Statesman* on 23 October 1981 extracts were published from a document said to have been written by the deposed Pakistani Premier, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in reply to an article by Mr Gauhar in the *Guardian* two years earlier. Mr Gauhar is satisfied that this document was a forgery. We believed that it was written by Mr Bhutto. The extracts from that document were a virulent attack on Mr Gauhar, whom his Counsel, Mr Desmond Browne, described in court as 'a man who has suffered much for press freedom', having been detained by the martial law regime when editor of the newspaper *Dawn* in Pakistan in 1972 and adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

'A number of insulting and quite untrue statements and charges were made against Mr Gauhar's private life and personal character,' Mr Browne said. 'As a journalist Mr Gauhar was most injured by the utterly false assertion that during his time in Pakistan he had been involved in subversive activities and had had contacts with foreign intelligence agents.'

For the *New Statesman*, Mr Geoffrey Shaw said the Defendants now accepted that this charge and the further charge that the Plaintiff was an opportunist and a man of shifting loyalties were wholly untrue.

A further article appeared in the *New Statesman* on 30 October 1981 dealing with Mr Gauhar's role as Editor of the *Guardian Third World Review*. This article asserted that Mr Gauhar approached the *Guardian* with the 'highly sinister proposition' to establish 'a regular editorial section dealing wih Third World issues' and that this had caused a breach in British press independence. In fact, as Mr Browne observed, Mr Gauhar as the co-editor of the *Guardian Third World Review* received a British Press Award in 1978 when the *Review* was recognised as a contribution to British journalism. Mr Gauhar was attacked as a person who believed press freedom to be 'an imperialist hangover' and the article claimed that under Ayub Khan's regime he had been responsible for the most repressive censorship ever and for the suppression of rights supposedly guaranteed under the Pakistani constitution.

For the *New Statesman*, Mr Shaw conceded that the Defendants had not sought and could not seek to justify these allegations. They accepted that the Plaintiff was not, as had been alleged, sycophantic towards repressive military dictatorships and that he had not refused to deal with liberation movements, such as the PLO.

The Defendants acknowledged that what they had published against Mr Gauhar was untrue and expressed their unqualified apologies for the injuries done to him. They had agreed to pay him substantial damages and all his legal costs.

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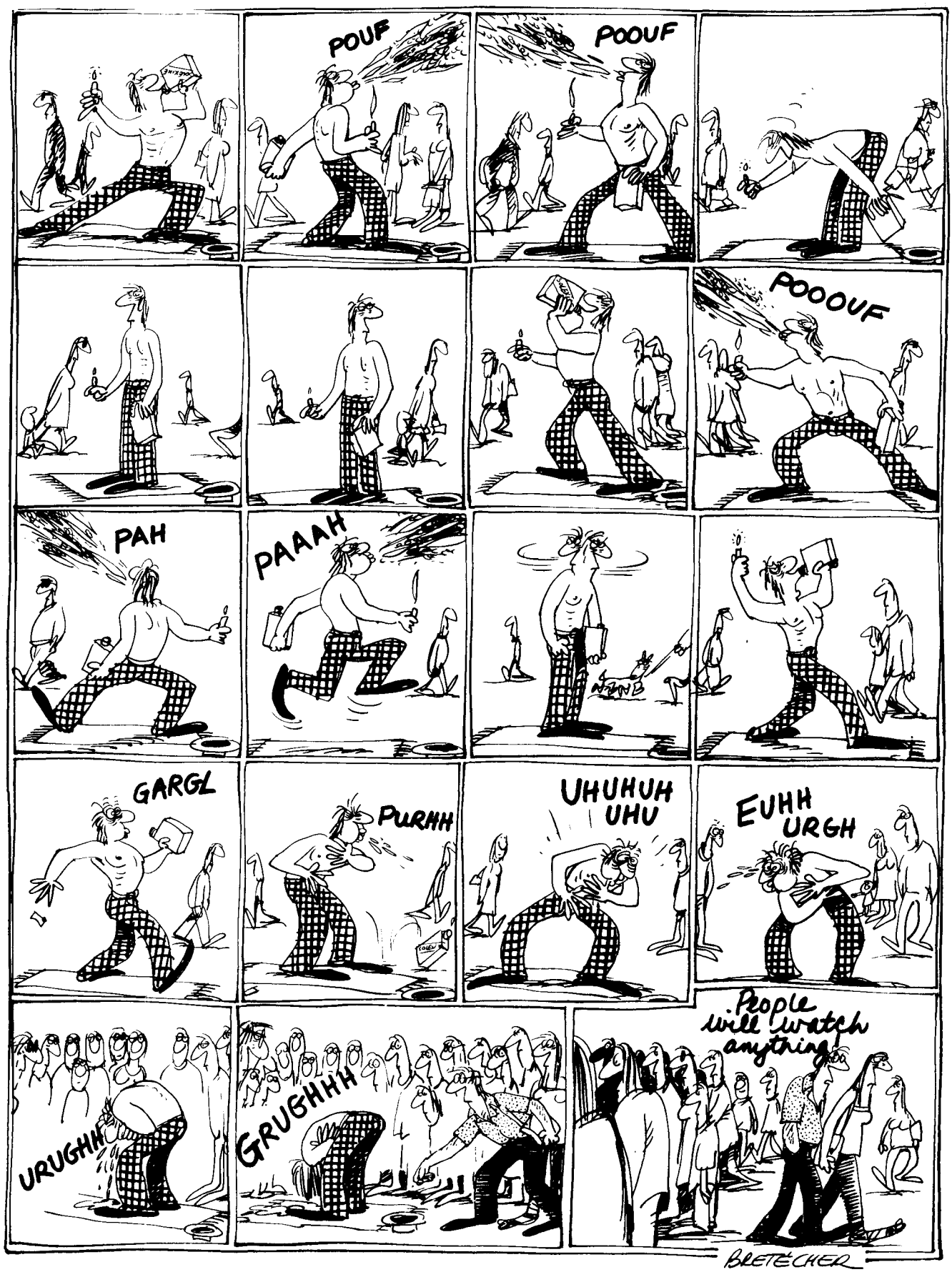
BRETÉCHER
COVENT GARDEN



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LETTERS

Militant matters

David Hughes, National Agent, The Labour Party

Frank Lee's 'Militant falls divided' (*NS* 4 November) contains a number of inaccuracies which should be corrected before they become regarded as fact.

Keith Dickenson, together with the four other members of the Editorial Board of *Militant*, is no longer a member of the Labour Party. He was expelled from membership by the National Executive Committee in February 1983. He was given the opportunity of a personal appeal to Annual Conference in October this year. That appeal was rejected by over 5 million votes to 1½ million. He is not now a member of the Labour Party and so Hammersmith CLP is not required to expel him. They simply have to stop including a non-member in their meetings.

If they continue to treat him as a member of the Party and the 'NEC decides to enforce its authority' – in other words carry out a Conference decision – it will not be necessary to deprive all the members of the Hammersmith Party of their membership. After all it is not the individual members of the Party in Hammersmith who would be defying Conference but a majority of the delegates to the General Committee. The NEC would simply have to secure a General Committee in Hammersmith which was prepared to accept Conference decisions. I do not think we would need to deprive anyone of their membership to achieve that.

Snape's snide snipes

Tariq Ali, London N8

Over the years I have become accustomed to slanders and lies in the mainstream media (including the *Daily Mirror*). It is still somewhat disconcerting to find reflections of the same in magazines such as the *New Statesman*.

Peter Snape's Diary item (*NS* 4 November) was an utter disgrace. Snape may or may not have been the best candidate of the soft Right for the post of Chief Whip in the PLP. His gutter journalism, totally devoid of political content, has no place in *your* pages.

Snape referred to me as 'unemployed' and the 'son of a millionaire' and attacked those MPs who wrote recently to the *Guardian* defending my right to join the Labour Party. These two falsehoods were compressed in a single sentence. Just for the record, I am not unemployed. I manage to make a modest living out of my writing. True, the living is not that of an MP or a Chief Whip. It is sufficient, however, for me to exist. I have no complaints.

Even more grotesque is the assertion that my father is a millionaire. He is, in fact, a veteran socialist and journalist, currently editing a foremost opposition weekly in Pakistan, under difficult conditions. In case Snape thinks that I'm being evasive, I will also inform him that my mother has, for over three decades, been a leading figure of the Democratic Women's Federation, not a body held greatly in esteem by the present military régime. Both of them have suffered brief spells in prison.

Jeremy Corbyn MP & Chris Adamson, London N7

Peter Snape, commenting in last week's diary (*NS* 4 November) on the loss of two Labour Council seats in Islington to the SDP, stated: 'It is a relief to see that – despite the euphoria of the opinion polls – in Islington at least some people have their priorities right.'

If these views can be taken as a reflection of his support for Labour where, for one reason or another, he has taken a dislike to the candidate and his/her supporters, it does seem that the 15 votes he received in his contest for chief whip are, if anything, over generous.

Gagging anti-racism

John Hinshelwood, Don Kirkley, Secretaries of the Brent and Barnet Liaison Committees of NATFHE

Amrit Wilson's claim (*NS* 21 October) that NATFHE's leadership is trying to expel some members of Kilburn Polytechnic Branch has been refuted by Peter Dawson in his letter of 28 October. But the article goes on to present the issue as a clear case of victimisation on the part of NATFHE. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is that one or more ordinary members have made a complaint regarding the conduct of some members of Kilburn Branch and that this is being investigated according to procedures laid down by Rule.

John Fernandes's concern about racism in the police force has been echoed throughout the union, which has a record of working against racism. However, certain principles of trade unionism have not been observed by the campaign that was formed specifically round John Fernandes – one of which is that strength comes from unified collective action. The group which led the campaign, failing to win support for their tactics and strategy, refused to accept the majority view in the union and openly campaigned in favour of Brent's proposal to withdraw staff.

The refusal of John Fernandes to allow his case to be handled as casework meant the services of the full-time official were rejected by him. This dispute contained both individual and collective elements, and the active involvement of a full time official was a vital ingredient. But one element was played off against the other and the union spent valuable time trying to set the record straight and pick up the pieces. Given the circumstances, it is not surprising that the first NEC 'police group' report could not give more lead in tackling the issue of racism – although, as stated in Peter Dawson's letter, the second report gave great attention to this.

In this dispute, along with the issue of John Fernandes was the issue of job security of all the staff at the police school. NATFHE's view was that Brent's threat to withdraw staff would not influence the police, but rather give them a free hand to make alternative arrangements. What basis of unity was there in a so-called trade union campaign which aligned itself with the employers to threaten the jobs of all concerned? The present situation is that all those who asked to continue their involvement with civilian work at the police school are now employed by Barnet Authority. This work is now under the control of the Governors and Academic Board of Hendon College of FE, as was originally agreed it would be by the Barnet and Brent authorities in July 1982, well before John Fernandes was excluded. The courses and staff at Hendon College are not under the control of the police. Many prominent members of the Outer London Region of NATFHE continue to be concerned with these issues and work within the union to resolve the various divisions that have arisen amongst the membership. The Branches and Liaison Committee in Barnet continue to represent union policy and exert pressures to further increase the quality and quantity of anti-racist teaching in cadet training.

Henry's fan club

Phil Braithwaite, Birmingham 14

Anthony Barnett was quite right, in his review of Seymour Hersh's new book on Henry Kissinger (*NS* 21 October), to stress the particularly high standing that the book's subject enjoys in Britain. The only time I've had a letter *altered* (as opposed to being cut) – in over 15 years of writing to local and national papers – was when I attacked Kissinger in a letter to the *Birmingham Post* in 1975.

In the closing weeks of the Vietnam War, I had, as secretary of the Birmingham Council for Peace in Vietnam, 11 letters published in the local press. In one of these, having quoted Averell Harriman's view that 'in any honest election the NLF would emerge as the predominant party in any coalition', I concluded thus: 'This is precisely why, in the *New York Times* (February 11, 1975), Anthony Lewis wrote: '. . . Henry Kissinger would rather have war than any visible political alternative'.

On publication, I found that this section had been removed, and replaced by: 'Perhaps that is why the war has lasted so long.'

During several protest telephone calls, I was informed that the editor himself had made the alteration – which, I was subsequently pleased to learn, was causing a 'furore' among his staff. Several days later I was allowed a follow-up letter correcting the alteration.

Guilty until proven innocent

Marlene Winfield, Prison Reform Trust, Nuffield Lodge, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RS

The Prison Reform Trust is preparing a report on prisoners held in custody before trial. The report will deal with several aspects of the remand procedure – the time taken to bring cases to trial, the conditions for remand prisoners, the effects on prisoners and their families of a period in custody, the consequences for acquitted prisoners, and compensation.

In order to make the report as effective and accurate as possible, we must be able to take an in-depth look at several cases. Therefore, we ask legal practitioners and others to contact us if they have knowledge of cases where any of the following apply:

1 The accused was held in custody for at least one month before trial and then not convicted (for any reason) within the past two years.

2 The accused was held in custody as above and then convicted but given a non-custodial sentence.

3 An acquitted defendant has attempted to gain compensation.

We would also like to hear from legal practitioners or others who have particular thoughts on any aspects of the remand procedure which we plan to include – or which we should include. We would be grateful if all information could be sent *as soon as possible* to the above address. Our telephone numbers are 01-586 4978 or 01-722 8871.

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Catherine Denvir

from

Woman beware woman

by
Emma Tennant

I FIRST MET FRAN when we were both at film school. The narrow, wooden steps in the old warehouse in Covent Garden literally threw us together one day – Fran was going up, with a great pack of equipment on her back, and I was running down. In the classic movie style, Fran's pack went flying: I helped pick it up and in ten minutes we were friends. That was eleven years ago. Fran knew only a few people in London, my mother was at that time well off and married to her Mexican count – or in the last throes of her marriage without knowing it – and I asked this tall, smiling American girl to come home and have a meal. For a while, everything went like a Cary Grant movie after that. Fran had luck, or charm, or whatever it is you can never work for. She calmed people and galvanised them into action at the same time. Her long, black hair made a perfect V in the middle of her smooth, white forehead. She was perfect. When she was older, and I heard of the bravery of her film news expeditions to places ravaged with war and disease – Beirut, Gambia, Afghanistan – I could imagine the crippled and the ill obeying Fran's camera instructions. You just had to do what she said.

I didn't stay long at the film school and nor did Fran: my reasons were that my mother became all at once penniless and we had to start on our uneven, hustling life (by hustling I mean that my mother used to send me round to the rich people she had known long ago and get me to ask for money: this only stopped after I burst out crying one day when the rich woman in question, in her Eaton Square flat, gave me a pound note and opened the door to show me out. Which finally distressed my mother.) Fran's reasons for leaving the school were that she was offered, from the States, the job of editing news film as it came through London, to make up documentary films for TV. She would eventually be able to make films of her own, if she made a success of it. From a student operating worn-out machinery in the film school, making 'shorts' that won acclaim but were always considered rather 'heavy' by the other students, she was propelled into the grown-up world. I went to see her in her editing room, where she was poring over footage from countries in the hold of starvation, illness, death. I wondered why she didn't tie back her long hair as it kept getting in the controls of the machine. As she stopped and speeded the images, the veil of soft black hair came down over frozen mountains, legless stumps of mountain men fighting for their high vil-

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lages, rubble of burning hospitals and children whose eyes would never recover from what they had seen. Fran seemed screened off now from our ordinary world, by her hair that shut her in with these satellite images of suffering and pain.

FRAN WAS RICH. In our early days as friends I didn't know this: the anonymity of jeans, sweat shirts, boots and leather bag with tassles and beads protected her from envy, from being set apart. When we went out together she had as little money as I – and I assumed, like everyone else, that her fees at the film school were paid by some overseas grant. In those days, anyway, the last winds of pretended freedom, liberty and easily held radical beliefs were still blowing (though they wouldn't blow for much longer) and the subject of money was never raised. Fran was just a part of the scene; many of the men we knew had hair as long and silky as she and walked with the same fastidious, narrow-waisted gait. If some of us saw a special quality in Fran, we put it down to her being an American woman at the outset of the great feminist revolution. It was sometimes said that Fran was more open, had fewer inhibitions, a stronger sense of her identity and future than her English counterparts: that was true, certainly, but it wasn't resented. The women among us felt inspired by Fran's easy mastery of any situation that came up. The men, wary of calm and competence in an intelligent woman at a time when intelligent women were questioning themselves and their expectations as never before, admired Fran and stood to one side. It was as if they knew a New Man was needed to partner this New Woman (for that is what Fran appeared to be – a member of a new species of a distant continent, a species that lacked masochism, dependence, vulnerability – woman's traditional ills). This New Man had not yet evolved. Such was the nonsense we all talked and thought in those days long ago – but, as is often the case with nonsense, there was a certain amount of truth in it. Fran did seem impregnable, in every sense; and the fact that the other students kept their distance from her meant that she and I could spend all the more time together. There must have been something in me, the very opposite of Fran, that appealed to her – but of course I was very different then.

I SAID TO FRAN, one late July evening, the kind of dead, London evening that still makes me think of the end of schooldays, of the beginning of life, of Ireland, of joy: 'I'm going tomorrow. I wish you could come.'

Fran was sitting on the floor of one of my temporary bedrooms. There was a sprigged quilt on the bed, I remember, with cigarette holes burnt in it: my mother must have lent it to one of her drunken friends. Tarty mirrors lined the walls – you could see yourself walking in and going out like a dog at a show.

'You're going?'

'Cliff Hold.' The name sounded particularly secure in a room like this. 'I'll ask Moura . . . she's so kind, Fran – and you'd like to come, wouldn't you? She's bound to say yes.'

That was how I saw myself at the time. The favoured daughter of the beautiful Moura. 'Everyone' knew me out there. At parties, when I helped to hand the mayonnaise-with-everything snacks there were knowing smiles and suggestions that it was a waste of my time to go back to England at all. But Philip was still at University then. I had to have a semblance of something to do.

'Ireland.' Fran put her head on one side. Her black hair swung over her face. 'Well, I don't know.'

I felt hurt, which seldom happened with Fran. To be indifferent to Cliff Hold, even if you'd never been there, was intolerable. And Fran had seen the photographs of the house from the fuchsia lane – the stone eagle-gates, the clipped peacocks of box, the door with its heavy ledge of overhanging stone. She'd seen the house from the sea, taken when Philip and I had been out in the boat. And from Dunane, the view of the staircase garden under the house, which was windowless that side, and looked like a continuation of rock. She'd been excited at the idea of a place like that – so foreign, that was what she'd said.

If some of us saw a special quality in Fran, we put it down to her being an American woman at the outset of the great feminist revolution.

'I'd like to get to grips with Ireland.' (At this point Fran already had her new job in the editing rooms of the great American TV network in Portland Place. Situations, countries were like dates in a box, and she plucked at them with a two-pronged fork: are they oppressive/potentially revolutionary regimes? Then she edited the incoming footage accordingly.) I knew she'd never been to Ireland – but nor was she yet in a position to make films of her own. I saw her trying to make up her mind whether it was worth going over, finding a 'line' she'd like to pursue and coming back to persuade her bosses of the validity of a short documentary. She didn't know then, she could hardly guess, how much material would fall in her lap, and by way of life rather than research. She sat calmly back on her heels on the floor of my room and said, 'No Minnie. It's a nice idea. But I have to go to Turkey. I have to get to grips with Turkey.'

So Fran didn't come to Cliff Hold. I couldn't have known then, either, that five years later Fran would marry Gareth. (She met him in New York and married him within a month. She didn't even answer the letter of congratulations I sent at the time of the wedding. But then I didn't mean the congratulations. It seemed to me ludicrous that Fran – whom I'd known, who belonged to my memories of a happy past – and Gareth, the younger brother of everything I'd lost, should meet three thousand miles away and fall in love.) I sat at the lino-covered table – we were in North Kensington by then – and stared out at the plane tree just coming into leaf. The barks of the trees were green with winter and the small, lighter green leaves danced about them in the wind foolishly, like a conjuror's handkerchief.

'I'm not surprised,' my mother said. 'Gareth would. Think of all the money.'

My mother usually referred to any substantial sum as 'lovely money' so I felt glad to be let off that at least. The doorbell rang: we were expecting a pupil. But I said, in that slow voice which so exasperates my mother: 'I didn't know Fran was so rich as all that.'

Of course you did, my mother might have replied. There was the door to open, though, and mention of my faulty memory depresses her more than it does me. So the subject was abandoned, except for vague echoes of my mother saying, in that house in Belgravia where we lived when I was at film school, 'Your friend told me her name. Or rather I had to force it out of her in these days of Cool.' (And she'd snorted; she was 'amused', her cigarette drooped ash). My mother said Fran's name was Alderton. They were rich, even I must know they were one of the richest families in the States. She could have told, anyway – Fran had something special about her – she'd guessed it all along.

I didn't want Fran's special quality to have to do with money, so I must have forgotten intentionally that the Aldertons had museums named after them, that they had estates anywhere you care to mention, that the New York house, which I'd visited late in that wonderful year I thought myself engaged to Philip, had maids and two chefs and silver boxes of cigarettes that seemed to fill up as soon as they were emptied. I remembered when my mother spoke of Fran only the bright late October morning, my excitement and Fran's as we went to her offices in the Upper East Side and she showed me her first independently-made film. Afterwards, we went to SoHo and had a meal of frogs' legs and dark red wine. I see the meal, and the red-checked tablecloth, more clearly than the film, which had men's faces dried by sun and wind, blinking against the sun in turbans – I'm ashamed to say I don't even know which issue Fran was doing her in-depth exploration on.

That was the New York when Vietnam was still in the air and Dylan's songs still blew around corners and into boutiques, stuffy with incense and dope. In Greenwich Village the sound blasted into the old houses, into the lower-ground apartment where a friend of Fran's – he was known as J – was making the kind of revolutionary documentary Fran desperately wanted the network to emulate. She was still very young then. □

This is an excerpt from Woman Beware Woman, *which will be published by Cape on 24 November.*

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POETRY
Derek Mahon

Quaat?

Quoof
PAUL MULDOON *Faber* £4
Liberty Tree
TOM PAULIN *Faber* £4
The Selected Paul Durcan
ed. EDNA LONGLEY *Blackstaff* £4.50

Muldoon's work is peculiarly resistant to paraphrase; it's often hard to say what it's 'about'. On close inspection he has three themes – childhood, Ulster and myth. (Sex too, though there's less of that in **Quoof** than in his previous books.) The childhood poems retain a slight Heaneyesque colouring, though this is less a matter of influence than of similar background; and there is an important difference in that where Heaney sheds light on the dark recesses, Muldoon exchanges opacity for opacity, characteristically concluding with a teasing displacement of gravity that seems to say, 'Make of this what you will', 'Take it or leave it', even 'Like it or lump it'. I, for one, take it and like it, without always knowing quite what to make of it.

I think the truth is that Muldoon's three themes are really one; and this is the source of his unique strength. 'Trance', for example, looks at first glance like a whimsical recreation of some long-ago Christmas Eve; but if we bear in mind the *Innuit* reindeer of the middle stanza, the last – which might otherwise seem vivid and engaging but little more – takes on another level of meaning:

> My mother slams the door
> on her star-cluster of dregs
> and packs me off to bed.
> At 2 am I will clamber downstairs
> to glimpse the red-and-white
> up the chimney, my new rocking-horse
> as yet unsteady on its legs.

'Trance' is about an Ulster childhood transformed by the power of myth, which for Muldoon (as for any anthropologist) is universal – Irish, Amerindian, Greek. That rocking-horse 'as yet unsteady on its legs' (call it Pegasus) he will ride to strange effect later in the book, when he follows up his celebrated Chandleresque 'Immram' with another legendary ramble, 'The More a Man Has the More a Man Wants', a quest poem 'based on the Trickster cycle of the Winnebago Indians' but with a Belfast gunman as its protagonist – the whole enriched by thematic cross-reference, classical allusion, snatches of folk-song, and a street-wise grasp of the minutiae of 'Troubles' life.

Muldoon's narrative gift – unusual among contemporary poets – is ingenious and sometimes bewildering. Something very interesting is going on in 'The More a Man Has', but it will be a while yet before I've figured out exactly what it is. In the meantime I can recommend the lyric poems as being up to the indisputably high standard of his acknowledged best. Aside from 'Trance' and 'Gathering Mushrooms' (one of his finest poems yet) there are, to mention only two more, the difficult but magnificent 'Yggdrasill' and the brief but unforgettable 'Mink':

> A mink escaped from a mink-farm
> in South Armagh
> is led to the grave of Robert Nairac
> by the fur-lined hood of his anorak.

Where *Quoof* is opaque to the point of secretiveness, **Liberty Tree** is direct to the point of vehemence. Paulin is a frankly political poet, intellectually in a line of descent from those Belfast radicals who attached themselves to Wolfe Tone and the ideals of the French Revolution. He dreams (don't we all?) of a 'sweet, equal republic' whose roots, for him, lie in the dark soil of Protestant Ulster, for which he entertains a not unfamiliar love-hate:

> I see a plain
> Presbyterian grace sour then harden
> As a free strenuous spirit changes
> To servile defiance . . .

His love is reserved for a might-have-been and a not-yet, his enmity (which is graphic and exhilarating) for treasonable clerks like the pseudo-poet 'Rupert Brookeborough'. He prefers (don't we all?) figures like Chénier and Mandelstam who died significant deaths in the open air.

Liberty Tree is full of exciting phrases, lines, even whole poems; but I am bothered by Paulin's tendency to make notes, his impatience to get an idea into verse and get on to the next one, so that the implications of an image or a scenario are not worked through. An example is the briefly touched-upon plague-city of Oran, whose erstwhile relation to metropolitan France suggests a parallel with Belfast; but, having touched, he rather lets it go. This suits me fine, since I am myself working on something similar about Camus; but it makes for a frustrating read.

The most striking feature of this collection (Paulin's third) is a deliberate roughening of texture. Although he still dreams 'of grace and reason', more in tune with his present mood is the

> gritty
> sort of prod baroque
> I must return to
> like my own boke.

Except for Simmons, his predecessors have tended to put 'poetry' first. What Paulin puts first is the engaged imagination – a commitment, a devotion even, to the harsh realities of oil-drum and tumbril; and the cacophonous new music of his verse mimics those realities in a way not heard before. His poetic voice affects the spine like crushed glass under a kitchen door. Muldoon and he have found strange new sounds for an old predicament.

Both are established names in Britain. Not so Durcan, though he is an established name in Ireland, where he is thought of in

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the two-fold guise of satirist and surrealist: a title like 'Irish Hierarchy Bans Colour Photography' will give you some idea. Edna Longley, in her introduction to **The Selected Paul Durcan**, reads this one as an attack on 'black-and-white attitudes'. Durcan, she rightly says, is 'peculiarly sensitive to Ireland's changing line-up of anti-life forces'. He is peculiarly sensitive to much else besides. The synoptic two-line epigram 'Ireland 1972' –

> Next to the fresh grave of my beloved grandmother
> The grave of my firstlove murdered by my brother –

is intensely painful and resonant; but no less typical is another epigram, 'La Terre des Hommes' –

> Fancy meeting *you* out here in the desert:
> Hallo Clockface –

which takes us into a different sphere altogether. Durcan's is a radical humanist sensibility at work on contemporary Ireland; but it is also a metaphysical sensibility at work on the nature of reality itself. His poems can be strange, bitter, tender, hilarious and very moving. Try 'She Mends an Ancient Wireless', 'The Drimoleague Blues' and 'The Death by Heroin of Sid Vicious'. □

TV REPORTING
Bob Woffinden

Action-men

Behind Russian Lines
SANDY GALL *Sidgwick & Jackson* £8.95
A Hitch or Two in Afghanistan
NIGEL RYAN *Weidenfeld* £8.95
In the Front Line
MARTYN PEDRICK *Robson* £8.95

In August 1982 Sandy Gall went to Afghanistan to report on the war there. He'd arranged the trip through Mohammed Es haq, overseas spokesman for the mujahideen forces of the Panjsher valley, the main centre of resistance to the Russian occupation. Initially, he had felt uncomfortable with Es haq:

> I resented the fact that he did not seem particularly impressed by my importance, appearing unable to differentiate between a responsible journalist like myself and some fly-by-night freelance who was interested in the Afghan war more as a personal adventure than as a serious piece of reportage.

This distinction is one to which we'll return. In the meantime, Gall was quickly reassured about Es haq, partly because of his politics ('He was extremely sceptical of the West's gullibility *vis-à-vis* the Soviets, advancing hard-line views that made Mrs Thatcher sound positively wet. I now felt that here was a sane and sensible man: someone who knew what he was talking about') and partly because he proved a reliable contact. Together with a two-man crew and former ITN editor Nigel Ryan (acting as producer), Gall spent more than two months inside Afghanistan. Though the journalistic bounty yielded by the mission – one hour-long documentary for Central TV, two full-length books – may seem excessive, it is not necessarily disproportionate considering that the team had several meetings with Ahmed Shad Massud, the charismatic guerrilla leader, and was able to bring back first-hand accounts of the progress of the war and the nature and strength of the Resistance.

They encountered no evidence that mercenaries were augmenting or organising the opposition forces. The mujahideen, in fact, receive minimal foreign support. Some funds arrive from outside – chiefly, it seems, from France, the one European country whose interest in the Afghan struggle extended beyond the Moscow Olympics. Otherwise, the guerrillas fund their efforts through a five per cent war tax levied on the (*wholly supportive*) *local population*, and on revenue from the sale of emeralds mined in the Hindu Kush.

Any arms deliveries that do arrive from abroad are frequently tampered with in Pakistan, where second-hand guns are substituted for new ones. Apart from these, the mujahideen rely only on very antiquated weapons, literally left-overs from the British engagements of the last century; or new Soviet automatic rifles, either captured or else traded for hashish. News that the Red Army is turning to pot could lead to a re-appraisal of Western defence strategy.

Gall's team unfortunately became separated from its camera equipment just at the point when the Russians launched a new offensive up the Panjsher valley, and thus was unable to film what would have been the most damning evidence of Soviet activity inside Afghanistan: the deliberate random bombing of civilian targets.

In view of this, it's perhaps understandable that both books should be so vigorously anti-Soviet. Gall describes the guerrilla movement as 'wonderfully heroic' and makes no secret of his sympathies. The tenets of 'responsible journalism', however, surely demanded that he should have been somewhat more rigorous in his inquiries. There are times when he and Ryan seem positively ingenuous. No mercenaries? Hardly any foreign aid? The CIA must be uncharacteristically lethargic. Similarly, information that the mujahideen control 90 per cent of the countryside is unquestioningly accepted.

Of course, Afghanistan should be free to conduct its own affairs, but what if it was? Would the world witness the creation of another Muslim regime as bloody as the Ayatollah Khomeini's or as autocratic as President Zia's? Gall doesn't ask.

There is another point. It can safely be assumed that the Russians are *au fait* with both the guerrillas' supply lines and the fact that the various factions of the Resistance are based in Peshawar, Pakistan. One trembles for Peshawar's fate, had Henry Kissinger or Ariel Sharon been conducting the Russian action.

Of the two books, Gall's is skimpy and Ryan's has the greater narrative precision. Several lacunae in the former are clarified in the latter. Indeed, parts of *Hitch* are so well-written that it's tempting to say that Ryan, whose first book this is, has missed his vocation.

Gall himself introduces the name of Richard Hannay, and it is particularly appropriate. Despite his disclaimer, *Behind Russian Lines* actually is a 'personal adventure' story, with goodies and baddies as sharply delineated as in any Buchan novel. As such, it should not be underestimated. Gall's courage, tenacity and sense of purpose are all admirable; but he has insufficient reserves of that burning curiosity which is the *sine qua non* of responsible journalism.

Partly, this is the result of a system which sets drama and action above information and analysis. ITN always has preferred its war-zone reporters to deliver adventure stories. *In the Front Line* documents the many close calls suffered by ITN crews in the field. (Peter Sissons was very seriously injured in Biafra in 1968.) Gall once filed an into-camera report from Vietnam, with shells exploding on all sides. He duly received a telex from London: 'Please don't wear tin-hat. It tends to over-dramatise the situation.'

So there it is. Most of the time television delivers adventure journalism rather than serious news reporting; and even the adventure journalism must be sanitised for public consumption. □

POLAND
Gary Mead

Neither hand

The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-82
TIMOTHY GARTON ASH *Cape* £12.50

Spectator correspondent Garton Ash has written one of the finest books currently available on Solidarity, its history and wider significance. By far the most important section of the book is Part II, 'Reflections', where he impartially rebukes West German appeasers of Jaruzelski, Western peace campaigners and Reagan's administration for their silence on the true identity of Solidarity and on its violent repression. This part of the book will initiate yet further misunderstanding: a pity since, as Garton Ash earlier argues, we frequently collaborated in the error of trying to fit Solidarity into Left-Right categories, whereas we need to adjust *our* categories to fit Solidarity. This work goes further than anything else in the direction of eliminating artificial, imposed and therefore redundant meanings on the first genuine working-class revolution in history.

Part I is chronological and covers ground already thoroughly worked over in several other texts, but here with more panache and

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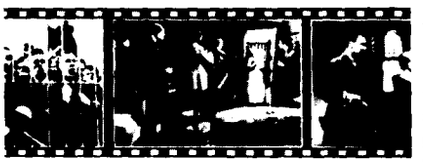
Basil Blackwell Autumn 1983



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superior style. An exception to this is a rather sentimental chapter on the author's stay in a peasant commune in Rzeszow, close to the Polish-Soviet border. There Garton Ash saw this verse scribbled on a wall:

> we don't care about life
> the pig also lives
> we want a life of dignity.

All the main ingredients of Solidarity's ethos are here – indifference to personal sacrifice, a bitter sense of Poland's slide into the status of swinish corruption, resolve to gain more than cheaper sausage. Solidarity preached and practised what Lenin dismissed as impossible – working-class unity based on sophisticated political, not increased wage, demands.

Garton Ash offers perhaps the best available definition of what Solidarity was up against in the Polish state – 'consultative authoritarianism', elsewhere described as a 'police welfare state'. The state made full use of Solidarity's weaknesses to squirm out of the 1980 Gdansk agreements, but Solidarity's weaknesses were simultaneously its strengths. Its determined non-violence, powerful internal democracy, consistent refusal to use its only weapon – the strike – save as a last resort, all prevented Solidarity from exploiting its advantage over the state. In turn, the state didn't hesitate to exploit every crack that opened up.

The book combines on-the-spot notebook journalism with armchair history, but a rather discomfiting armchair it is. It encourages Garton Ash frequently to jolt himself and reader by striking home with exactly the right questions. No easy answers here. Any criticisms I have are trivial; his fondness for exclamation marks at points of blatant irony, for instance, is irritating. But throughout it's impossible to miss the author's love for Poland and the Solidarity members he met, a love that concentrates rather than blurs his judgment.

In the last and best section Garton Ash delves into the larger issues raised by Solidarity. His suggestion that what occurred was a 'revolution of the soul' will be discordant only for those who weren't there. *Solidarity overturned so many of our political clichés*, including the notion that East European protest naturally hates social ownership of the means of production, and the Marxist dogma that social being determines consciousness purely and simply.

Who could have expected that the splintered, alcoholic, corrupted, intellectually and socially under-nourished Polish working class of Gierek's 1979 could topple not simply a person but a whole period of history in 1980? There's every chance that this book will irritate those unable to lift themselves from the Left-Right stereotypes so prevalent today, who will bridle at such simple proofs of Solidarity's *spiritual* importance as the fact that the 1981 attempted suicide rate dropped by 30 per cent in comparison with 1980 figures. That is their loss. As Garton Ash quotes Vladimir Bukovsky – 'I do not come from the leftist camp or the rightist camp – I come from a concentration camp.' □

FICTION
Harriett Gilbert

Uses of literacy

Sebastian
LAWRENCE DURRELL *Faber* £7.95
The Other Side of the Fire
ALICE THOMAS ELLIS *Duckworth* £7.95
Come Come
JO JONES *Sheba* £3.95
Mae West is Dead
ed. ADAM MARS-JONES *Faber* £10 & £3.50
More Collected Stories
V. S. PRITCHETT *Chatto* £12.50

One suicide, two knifings and one mock crucifixion, in a brothel, occur in the course of Lawrence Durrell's new novel. Whatever their relevance to plot, character or theme, they do at least jolt the reader awake from the tired old springs and loose, frayed webbing of everything else in **Sebastian.**

Durrell's prose can batter the senses with its beauty. In this fourth part of his 'quincunx', it sags with clichés and repetitions and meaningless, verbal space-fillers. Exclamation marks stagger to the rescue, but fail to add excitement to the desultory doings and half-baked thinkings of Constance – whose psychiatric methods have developed a B-movie ludicrousness; of Affad (Sebastian), her Gnostic lover, whose pursuit of death one would like to encourage; of Schwarz; of the Prince; of Lord Galen; or of any of the rest of that curiously drifting, expatriate, dilettante gang – whose lives we take up where the last volume ended, in Geneva, at the end of World War II.

The 'quincunx' attempts to synthesise the dualisms of West/East, Ego/Id, Male/Female, Creator/Created, etc. This thematic ambition has always exceeded its author's intellectual concentration – in *Sebastian*, it has also exhausted his sensual imagination. One passage only, in which Lord Galen rampages, on behalf of the governments of Europe, in search of a post-war 'culture' – 'It's all very well to suggest, as someone did, that we might get a book like this *Ulysses* rewritten in a more acceptable and forward-looking manner by someone like Beverley Nicholls . . .' – is alive with Durrell's precocious-adolescent flair. The rest is an unconvincing and unconvinced bluff.

Alice Thomas Ellis's **The Other Side of the Fire** is, more simply, a book about love – the kind into which people fall. Gleefully, it exposes the delusions by which that passion is fuelled. Claudia Bohannon has been married for 15 years, to steady, boring, boorish Charles, when she falls in love with Philip, the son of her husband's first marriage. To deflect disaster, she introduces Philip to Evvie, the undergrad daughter of her friend Sylvie. But Evvie is not only far more concerned with writing a romantic novel, she is also perfectly well aware that Philip's sexual interests are neither with herself *nor* his step-mother. Claudia plummets deeper. Charles seeks consolation with Sylvie – only Sylvie, like her daughter, isn't having any; preferring the civility of dogs.

This is a fast and funny novel, its cynicism warmed by compassion, its use of easy stereotypes (especially when it comes to the men) compensated for by a general understanding of the subtleties, the intricate lunacies of human beings in love. The potential for tragedy is recognised, but Evvie, writing her gothic romance, has the definitive word:

> 'She danced slowly with heart-breaking grace . . . His wife was evil – but, oh, she was lovely, lovely . . .' It was at this point that Evvie laughed until she nearly cried. 'What's so funny?' asked Sylvie curiously, peering in at her daughter. '*Lerve*,' said Evvie. 'It makes me laugh.'

Jo Jones's **Come Come,** an impressive, troubling first novel, is also concerned with misunderstanding in love. Hecka, whose voice tells most of the story, hurls language out in a pyrotechnic net of puns, free association, the playground word-games of schoolgirls, anything that will help to capture her feelings, perceptions and experience. Aagot, her lover, is tight with her words, frightened by Hecka's extravagance, mistrustful of her hit-and-miss honesty. *Come Come* is the story of a struggle for communication. It is also, in itself, an attempt to wrestle from the language that we already have a form in which women (especially lesbians) can express the truth of their life. If Hecka and Aagot finally fail, the book goes a long way towards succeeding – and, to the end, urges others on. Come, come: a woman's reassurance to her child; her cry of sexual self-abandonment; her call to her sisters for support.

> The result (of the comparative freedom obtained by today's homosexuals) has been an assortment of improvised moralities combining in various proportions reaction against, and imitation of, heterosexual precedents. By and large, they resemble the provisional motorized vehicles which appeared before someone realized that a horseless carriage need not look like a carriage without a horse.

Thus Adam Mars-Jones in his introduction to **Mae West is Dead,** a collection of stories whose authors *have*, like Jo Jones, realised just that.

Gay is not only different from straight because of 'what one does in bed' – it redesigns the whole world. From Merril Mushroom's satire on old-fashioned lesbian courtship; through Rebecca Brown's tribute to Annie Oakley (an elegy for the 'girlhood' which male-designed 'womanhood' deforms); to Joseph Torchia's 'First Communion' (a witty-sad flight of fantasy in the company of Superman) – this book gives some fierce and brilliant examples from that co-existent perspective.

V. S. Pritchett's **More Collected Stories** contains almost half a century (1932-1977) of his terrier-like diggings, nippings and shakings in the foxholes of human dishonesty. The stories' clear-sightedness stops this side of cruelty. Their understanding implies whole novels, whole lives, whole sets of values and hopes, in a dozen pages of prose. □

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Newspeak: A Dictionary of Jargon

JONATHON GREEN *Routledge* £9.95

Nowadays, *jargon* is mainly used in a pejorative sense to denote professional euphemism or obfuscation: what Jonathon Green calls 'latter-day newspeak' because it complicates language and blurs meaning rather than, as in Orwell's original version, simplifying and sharpening. Green recognises, though, that the word also, and more properly, applies to 'the slangs and specific vocabularies of a number of trades, professions, occupations and interests'. This dictionary, despite its title, includes both kinds of jargon, concentrating on that most immediately part of everyday life: jargon from politics, finance, the military, computing, entertainment, the media, medicine, crime, the new therapies, advertising. A second volume will embrace other professions.

To compile a dictionary like this one is to invite, as even the great Partridge discovered, strictures concerning its inevitable omissions and inaccuracies. Shrewdly, Green usually confines himself to definitions – avoiding the invariably contentious areas of etymology, dating and attribution – and where these are inaccurate it is mostly through being not quite precise enough rather than entirely wrong. For his omissions, though, Green is more open to criticism. Even in the fields where he is admirably near comprehensiveness, the author commits some startling oversights. That inspired bureaucratic euphemism, *non-accidental injury to children* (child-battering) is absent; so, too, is *operational difficulties*, BR's brilliantly unspecific explanation for delays. Elsewhere, Green can be decidedly hit-or-miss. He includes a number of sports terms, for instance, but overlooks some of the commonest: *overlap* and *wall* from soccer, *yorker* from cricket, *rushing* from American football, *dunk* from basketball. And, inexplicably, there are fewer examples of lit. crit. jargon than of Foreign Legion slang: under a dozen, none of them currently fashionable. This volume and its successor are intended to form a comprehensive dictionary of jargon. Unless, though, the second volume is a supplement as well as a companion, Green will have to settle for the enterprise attaining the lesser status of flawed usefulness.

David Montrose

In My Time: An Autobiography

LORD ELWYN-JONES *Weidenfeld* £12.50

Only a few months have passed since the publication of Muriel Box's biography of Lord Gardiner. Now we have the autobiography of the man who served as Lord Chancellor in the 1974 Labour Government. Lord Gardiner lacked the inclination or the sense of self importance to do the job himself; Lord Elwyn-Jones has been less modest but has had to call upon the services of one Alex MacCormick to edit the book. The two books coming within such a short space of time lead to some instructive, if depressing conclusions.

Elwyn-Jones writes in a style which is neutral, even bland, and adopts an alarmingly casual tone when dealing with some of the truly high spots of his career. For example, he clearly felt deeply about the neglect by the NCB which led to the Aberfan disaster. He opened the Tribunal of Inquiry as Attorney-General, but in print the whole episode becomes anaesthetised.

As an MP he questioned the legality of the Suez operation. He shows how the State's failure to prosecute any of the oil companies involved in the Rhodesian sanctions-busting of the Seventies can be attributed to the failure of communication between the Law Officers' Department and the Foreign Office. Yet his reference to the passing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act is almost cavalier; and he seems a little complacent about the quality of our system of magistrates' courts. Worst of all, he is pictured leading the cheering in Westminster Hall for the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Republicanism may be a little out of fashion, but it is frustrating to see Labour Lord Chancellors performing such antics.

The odd joke (Welsh juries were against crime but they were not dogmatic about it) fails to redeem a book which cannot do full justice to the life of this great liberal lawyer.

Mark Benney

'The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Emigration

ANTONIO CARREIRA *C. Hurst & Co* £13.50

Atlas-makers don't like archipelagoes in the middle of oceans, far from where page-filling continents stop. This is one reason why you might never have noticed the dozen Cape Verde Islands, 350 miles west of the bulge of Africa. Besides, their history was locked away in the ramshackle, ill-documented Portuguese empire from discovery 500 years ago till independent statehood in 1975.

António Carreira has been patiently oiling and turning the tumblers for 20 years to tell of a hard-working people, mainly descended from white settlers and slaves from the African mainland, recurrently driven by drought and famine to death or emigration in their tens of thousands. His work has rarely been translated from Portuguese but this, one of his most recent books, has passed through a competent translator/editor, Christopher Fyfe.

Carreira analyses the movement of the islanders from the 18th century when they joined the crews of American whaling ships to the 20th when they have gone to sweep the streets of Lisbon and clean apartments in Rome. He dissects the offical and commercial collusion that, over more than a century and into the 1970s, sent many other Cape Verdians to slavish labour and early deaths on cocoa and coffee plantations on the tropical islands of São Tomé and Príncipe.

He provides numbers and legal references galore, but he has the eye for the picture that touches while figures only instruct – women donning black immediately their men have emigrated for America, feeling themselves as good as widowed; the famished wandering deranged through drought-sucked hills before their corpses, too many to bury, were eaten by pigs; Cape Verdian women on the plantations cleaving to Angolan men because they could catch not only their own daily quota of rats but that of their women too.

Anyone who wonders what independence of African states was for should read this book – and pay a visit to Cape Verde now. No one starves there any more.

Robert del Quiaro

Greenham Women Everywhere

ALICE COOK and GWYN KIRK *Pluto Press* £3.50

I approached this book with some trepidation, my mind clearly conditioned by media distortions and personal weariness into thinking that I 'knew it all' about Greenham. I was also fighting my own apathy in the face of ungovernable fear and despair. But, happily, *Greenham Women Everywhere* counters that despair with a sureness of purpose, and a calm, which effectively broke through my barrier of resistance.

But first, the bad points. The book is a curious and uneasy mix between handbook on direct action and historical/personal account of the Greenham campaign against cruise. It falls down on both counts. There are not enough practical details on organising or the law for an effective handbook, while the introduction and analysis are not wide or deep enough to convince sceptics.

But, despite that, for anyone with a conscience and imagination, *Greenham Women Everywhere* is at once an inspiration and a shock. The book contains women's individual accounts of how they became involved in the peace movement, and includes one experience of working in a mental hospital, where many people are actually breaking down under the threat of nuclear destruction. It is chilling, but true, that 'the damage that is being done *now* to people's vision of the future . . . is incalculable'.

Yet fear is not enough, and the book is tough, firmly emphasising individual responsibility, with a clear statement from the authors that 'if we do not stand out against nuclear weapons, then we are – however reluctantly – supporting them'. But Gwyn Kirk and Alice Cook quickly affirm that *any* small action of resistance is enough, that fear galvanised into action becomes strength, and that individuals *together* are a moving force even against such an apparently immoveable object as the American war machine.

Like the Greenham action itself, the book is moving because of this emphasis on the individual. And, above all, it is a timely reminder of the Greenham campaigners' ingenuity and persistence, as they try, despite constant attacks on the camp, to give us all their invaluable spirit of peace and resistance.

Barney Bardsley

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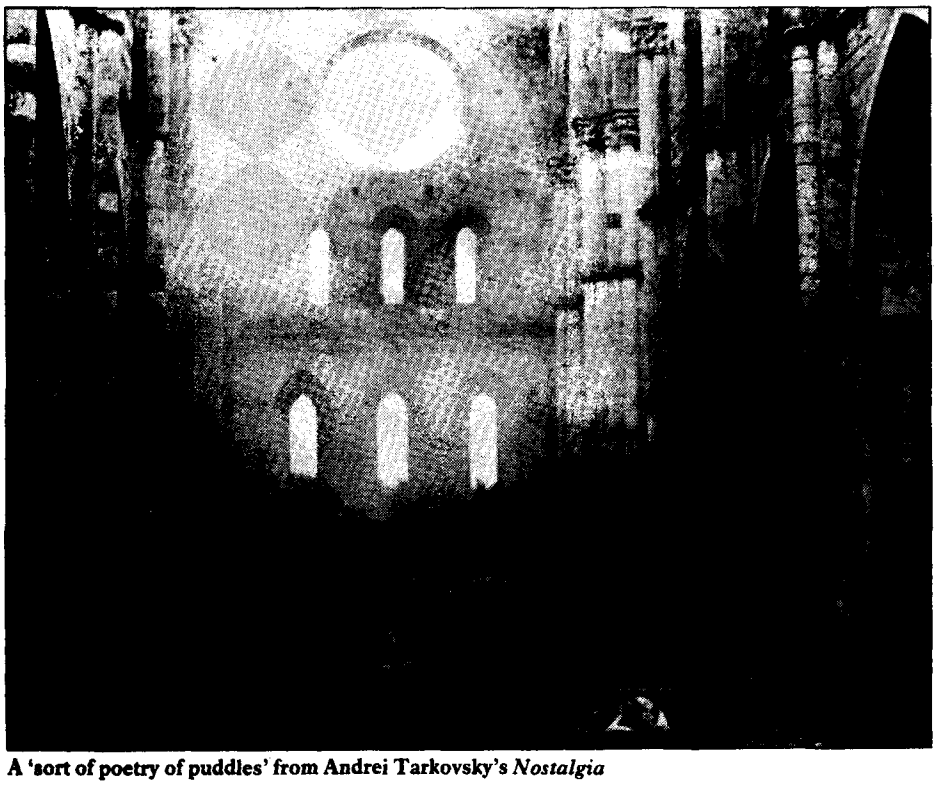
FILMS
John Coleman

Caviare to the general



A 'sort of poetry of puddles' from Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalgia*

Nostalgia (15)
Lumiere
Exposed (15)
Plaza; Classic, Chelsea; Odeon, Kensington
Bloody Kids (15)
ICA

Andrei Tarkovsky may well have gone to Italy for the setting of his latest film, but his tormented, religious, Russian soul stays uncompromisingly at home, not an icon's throw from the allegorical territory of *Stalker*. **Nostalgia** thoroughly earns its title. A gloomy university professor, Gorchakov (Oleg Yankovsky), accompanied by beautiful Eugenia (Domiziana Giordano) as restless interpreter, has landed up at a Tuscan spa, his projected pilgrimage in the steps of an 18th-century Russian composer – who later committed suicide – apparently in abeyance. When not mutely witnessing such visual marvels as a squeaking flock of birds suddenly released from the vestments of a saintly effigy, Gorchakov lies moodily in his bleak, shuttered bedroom, resisting the temptation of a breast impatiently bared by tawny Eugenia, flashbacking in monochrome to a pregnant wife, a rural homestead. One of the most astonishing images is to fill the screen at the very end, with this distantly glimpsed dwelling enshrined within the tall ruins of an Italian church: nostalgia's tricky apotheosis.

Meanwhile, Gorchakov's passivity has been disturbed by an encounter with a holy fool, Domenico (Erland Josephson), who leads him into some vast, decrepit building where rain drizzles remorselessly down and colourful items of garbage are dwelt on like treasures. Domenico hands over a candle stub, explaining he must accomplish the mission the locals refuse to allow the 'madman': to carry it lighted across a thermal pool in the piazza. In due course, Domenico sets fire to himself in Rome after haranguing a crowd of grotesques; and our Russian, who has already found the madman's reflection supplanting his own in a mirrored wardrobe becalmed in a street, edges with guttering wick round that mystical pool. Eugenia has long since driven blazingly off, taking a fair ration of sympathy with her.

God knows she has done her bit, even to the extent of reading odd lines from a book of poems by Arsenei Tarkovsky, the director's father. Gorchakov snaps that poetry is untranslatable, of course, adding that 'none of you understands Russia'. That may well be, but it seems fair to counter that *Nostalgia* does little to remedy matters. And to *that* the director, turbulently vocal off-screen, would rejoin he is simply not interested in everyday accessibility: 'I can't . . . make a film for the general public – I'd be mortified if I discovered I could.' Again, though with growing qualms, fair enough. Art is fully entitled to be difficult. Tarkovsky is entitled to expect an audience to work at his films. His flair for shock imagery, even a sort of poetry of puddles, is undeniable. The question by now is, rather, whether the difficulty of his work is justified by its rewards, whether all the enigmatic angst on display here is much more than the exteriorisation of a private depression. Those mists, those pools, above all that driving, obsessive rain . . . There are times when one feels numbly in the presence of a protracted gloss on Verlaine's '*Il pleure dans mon coeur comme il pleut sur la ville*'.

Any reservations about the achievement of Tarkovsky, however, pale into insignificance beside those brought pouring forth by the cult of James Toback. His well-named **Exposed** displays unwise aspirations to European status, having the benefit of Henri Decaë as cinematographer, Nastassia Kinski and Rudolf Nureyev in starring roles, Bibi Andersson in a bit part, and some unusual Paris locations. Thus equipped, Mr Toback throws caution to the winds with a script of his own devising, mixing memories of *série noire* film thrillers (poor Jean-Pierre Melville has been invoked: apart from the Decaë connection, hard to see why) with the desire to Say Something. This scrabbling for significance is made sophomorically clear in an opening lecture-room scene, which has a fat American prof (the protean Mr Toback) recommending *The Sorrows of Werthe* to his students and quoting Leslie Fiedler on 'the theme of the Redeeming Maiden'. In an immediately subsequent passage of bad temper and worse acting, the prof is disconcerted to find Ms Kinski has had him as both mentor and lover. Then, in more time than it takes to relate but less than one is prepared for in screen terms, the luscious lass is waitressing in New York, converted into a top cover girl and being elfinly wooed by Mr Nureyev, a top violinist who literally plays her like a fiddle for a rapturous few moments.

Putting his bow away, he inveigles her to Paris, where he confesses he is also the 'friend' he had spoken of, bent on avenging his mother's death from a bomb planted by one of the female myrmidons of top terrorist Harvey Keitel. Keitel likes lovelies and Nureyev intended Kinski as bait. Taking the script between her teeth, the top model bigheartedly beards the terrorist in his den. Tears before bedtime; and one could only wish that more had been tears of genuinely earned mirth. But Mr Toback seems mostly unaware of how funny he is.

Turn with relief to a retrieval from television, Stephen Frears's 1979 **Bloody Kids,** sharply written by Stephen Poliakoff and photographed with an eye to nightmares by Chris Menges. If there's a *Clockwork Orange* feel to much of it, you can be sure it was intended and it is, anyway, refreshed. The germ is a schoolboy jape that goes oddly and wryly adrift. One night 11-year-old Leo (Richard Thomas) happens on all the police activity attendant on a street accident. Next day, flourishing a high-ranking copper's cap that he's pinched, Leo plots a fake knife fight with his pal Mike (Peter Clark), using a bag of stage-blood. In the staged event, the knife slips, slightly wounding Leo and Mike's on the run.

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Which is where the interesting dislocations of a bad dream take over. Using Southend locations to merry hell (sea-front caff, shopping centre, disco, pedestrian precinct, hospital), Frears and Poliakoff race us through the helter-skeltering, destructive aimlessness of a youth-prowled Saturday night. There is a fierce performance from Derek O'Connor as Ritchie, the car-stealing nutter who takes alarmed Mike into his 'protection', and that innocent-eyed Leo looms like something out of *The Turn of the Screw* as the adult world of cops, nurses and firemen is horribly conned. The piece *does* have larger pretensions: not damagingly. □

ART
John Spurling

King's man

William Dobson
National Portrait Gallery

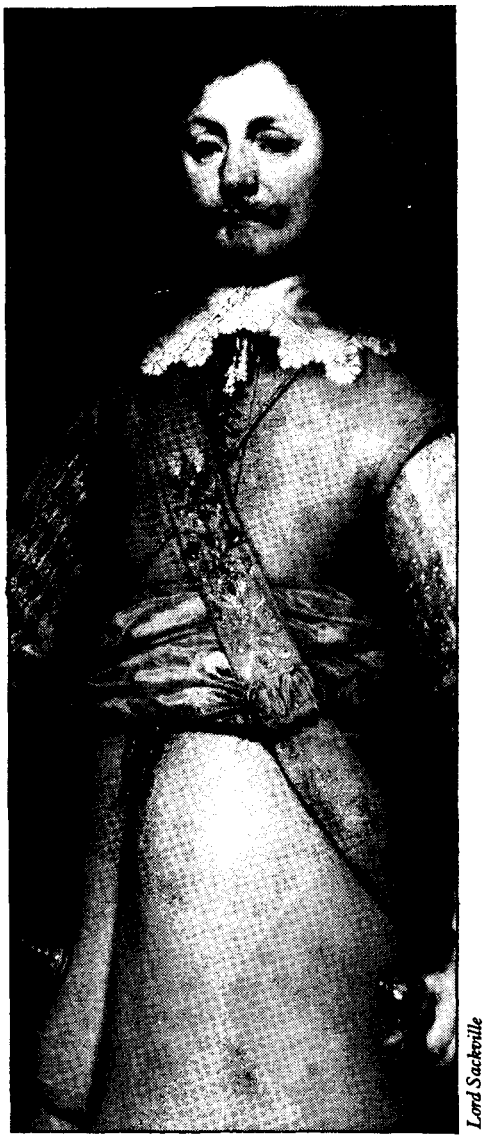
Van Dyck had just died, the king had just declared war on Parliament and removed his court to Oxford. That world of divine right to rule, pedigree, money and high culture to which Van Dyck had given an unforgettably glittering, sensitive and noble image in the grand European tradition of Titian and Rubens, had become a military headquarters billeted in cramped lodgings in a provincial city. Shakespeare would have relished the dramatic alteration; by what seems almost an act of Providence we can do so through the eyes of William Dobson.

He was a gentleman by birth (his father probably a lawyer with an artistic talent who was a close associate of Francis Bacon, the Lord Chancellor) and learnt his painting from a German artist living in Covent Garden. In an early self-portrait he presents himself as a tough, handsome young man with a sensual mouth and fleshy face, staring straight out and somewhat downwards as if confronting a hostile world, or at least the bailiffs, with resolute *hauteur*. In 1643, at the age of 32, he followed the Royalists from London to Oxford, set up his studio in the High Street and was immediately recognised as Van Dyck's successor.

Not that he was quite in Van Dyck's league as a painter, but very much the home-grown version of an international star – the Sickert to Degas, as it were. Yet for the work in hand he could hardly have been bettered: a good plain face-painter who manages to convey at the same time an individual character and a collective outlook. The identities of most of those sitters are known and Malcolm Rogers's good plain catalogue gives the brief biographies which, added to Dobson's lively likenesses, can make you feel you are as well acquainted with them as with secondary characters in Shakespeare or fellow-guests at a dinner-party. John, 1st Baron Byron, with his florid complexion, low forehead, axe-shaped moustaches and irritable posture is obviously a cavalryman who tended 'to engage the enemy when he needed not' even if you weren't immediately aware of the long black scar on his left cheek; and though you can't precisely read tactical genius in Montrose's face (Dobson painted him before he went off to run rings round Charles's enemies in Scotland), you can find an impressive mixture of determination and panache which is just as noticeable by its absence from the sad, unsteady face of Baron Rockingham, arrested by his own side for failing to hold his castle against Parliament.

In addition to their separate personalities, Dobson's sitters come across as officers in an army, people serving a common cause, men at work. It is this sense of concentration, practicality, reliability (except for poor Rockingham) that makes Dobson's world not so much an antithesis as an unexpected reverse side to Van Dyck's fastidious and spiritual one. It is rather like walking round the back of a delicately ethereal sculpture by Barbara Hepworth and discovering it to be sturdier, chunkier than you imagined. If you blotted out the Royalist red sashes, the ribbons and laces, slashed doublets and embroidery, or replaced them with soberer fashions, you might think you'd fallen in with a bunch of Roundheads. Even though they are not actually in the field, but have just stepped into Dobson's shop for a quick memento between skirmishes, these fellows bring an atmosphere of raw, open-air courage – faintly modified by humour and flamboyance – with them. Their studio appurtenances – guns, dogs, pieces of armour, monumental pillars or rocks, distant battles, heroic sculptures or reliefs – help to create this impression, but it is primarily a matter of stern mouths, steady stares and long noses with pronounced bone structures.

Such Royalists, you feel, deserved a better king to fight for. Dobson's head and shoulders of Charles himself, though still distinctly Van Dyckian, is a close-up of condescending majesty, self-esteem and uncompromising correctitude. It comes almost too close, as if the painter had been temporarily overwhelmed by the presence of his sitter but nevertheless plucked up his courage and dared to stare him out and commit him to canvas. The most moving portrait in the exhibition is that of Inigo Jones, old and looking rather ill. Shortly afterwards he was to be captured by Roundhead soldiers,

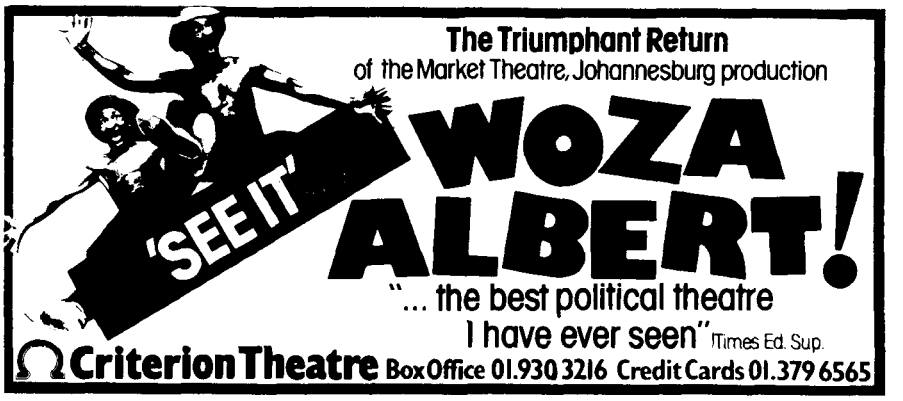


Lord Sackville

Detail from William Dobson's 'An Unknown Officer and a Page'

stripped and carried away in a blanket, but as Dobson shows him he is virtually telling us through barely open lips, with incredulous outrage, that the world he valued has been stripped and carried away already.

Dobson returned to London after the Royalists had been flushed out of Oxford and he died in poverty three months later. John Aubrey, his contemporary, called him 'the most excellent painter that England had yet bred' and no one seeing this extraordinarily sympathetic record of three years with the losing side would disagree with him. □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TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Myth Bardot

BRIGITTE BARDOT used to look at me with such uncritical warmth from inside my cupboard that I feel like a cheapskate returning her gaze half-heartedly after all this time. But I never forgave her for taking up with Roger Vadim and going blonde. Now, in **Brigitte Bardot, My Own Story** (C4) she rubs it in by saying how tellement beau and intelligent he was and what brilliant pre-marital sex they were having together at about the time I was interested in her.

Sister Mijanou described Vadim's first appearance at the Bardot house. They'd never seen anything like him, so M. Bardot, who manufactured liquid oxygen if you can credit it, took Roger into his study and showed him a revolver. 'Lay one finger on my daughter and I'll use it,' he told Vadim. When my girlfriend's father took me into his study he showed me a first edition of *The Waste Land*. But then laying one finger on a girl was good going in those days.

Old M. Bardot and his pistol must have injected a formidable eroticism into the couple's pre-married life, in case they needed it. They had to wait three years to live together and even then the old boy turfed Vadim out of her bedroom after the civil ceremony because the religious one wasn't till next day. It was BB's last submission. She and Vadim were about to consummate their affair in public with **And God Created Woman** (C4), a film which stands up remarkably, though at a different angle, in retrospect. It made Bardot a star, but there was a laurel wreath to the victor: 'It was a spiritual offspring. We decided to give each other one final present – our freedom.' And guess who did the giving?

Bardot has remained true to her impulses over the years and has now (Part II) 'given up that stupid profession' along with its menfolk. 'I loathe luxury,' she was persuaded, as we snooped about her secret quarters, but I counted at least three houses I could have learned to tolerate, especially with her around to relieve the hardship (she is not averse to working). One of the most attractive things about her is not so much her cooing over baby animals as her healthy dislike of human beings. I would say she is quietly misanthropic in her own way, without really knowing it. 'I was treated with contempt by the public. Now they say I'm a myth, well, it's too late, I'm not interested.' She gave the Canadians hell over their seal bashing, then the French press for misinterpreting her trip. In her rather ordinary way she is right about everything, but it was strange hearing banalities pouring so naturally from a mouth that caused one to fail 'O'-level maths, though not French. But that's life. 'Death is horrible, abominable, all that corruption, horreur, ugh!' My views exactly. However, she has found 'the most beautiful little cemetery in the world' where she plans to 'sleep through all eternity'. I'm booking my place now.

Jack Lemmon (**South Bank Show**) was very like her: nice, bright, ordinary, 'attractive, but not too attractive' (Billy Wilder), 'Harold Lloyd, but not that much of a *snook*' (whatever that is). Having listened to him talking for one hour I think he was only acting at being interesting about acting, because I am left with only images from his films. From *Missing*: 'I found a hat, then I could put a lid on the character. It's surprising how an actor will hang onto a little thing like that.' But not so surprising when every other actor says exactly the same thing.

He was full of ideas for bits of business for himself and it was fun seeing some of these, like the false exit he made in a film with Judy Holliday: 'I thought if I heard Cukor say "Less" one more time I would go mad. Then he told me, "Less". I said, "You mean you don't want me to act at all, right?" "Oh yes, yes," said Cukor.' Flipping from quips to clips terribly emphasised the decay of this nice actor's nice face as he wiped watery eyes. Brigitte would have flipped.

One of TV's favourite themes is how wicked and pleasure-seeking some person used to be (clips of same) compared to how good and abstemious they are now that they are rich and successful and humbled by it all. When **Ian Dury** (C4) writes 'We snooted our cocaine/and we fucked with true disdain/then we did both of these things again' it sounds great to us, but to him it's only satirical now, because he's come out the other side into serious writing and charity work: 'Inspiration is getting to our study at 9.00, as Delacroix said.' Dury went to a school for polio victims where he had to say 'dad' not 'daddy' and no one helped you if you fell down. Dury helped himself. He went to art school and had a band called 'Durex and the Gossamers'. 'Can you sing?' he asked a kid at the baths where he encourages handicapped children. 'No,' said the boy. 'Nor can I,' said Dury honestly. I didn't know you could put your child into a spin drier, but apparently this happens every day and there's nothing to be done about it. Dury is optimistic: 'By the time this record's finished everybody will be dead.'

Sloane Ranger visionary Peter Yorke has been helping us go wild with excitement celebrating the first birthday of Channel Four with his received views on style, **Hey, Good-Looking** (C4): 'Mrs Thatcher has brought style out of the closet. Her bows are pretend ties. Her hair is lacquered into Britannia's golden helmet.' The super-conservative style Yorke favours and affects was traced to its sauce in **Five Go Mad On Mescalin** (C4) another greedy farm hol from Peter Richardson's gang. Some of the dialogue had an attractive olde-world charm: 'Thanks for giving me that ducking, Julian. I 'spect I was acting like a right grammar school spiv.' But the barbs seemed a bit flaccid really, as if once they'd thought of the idea they'd knocked off and assumed that sticking out their bums would write the rest of it for them. It did mostly. □

THEATRE
Paul Allen

Class of '68

The Grass Widow
SNOO WILSON *Royal Court*
Sister Mary Ignatius
CHRISTOPHER DURANG *Ambassadors*
Francis
JULIAN MITCHELL *Greenwich*

The grass in **The Grass Widow** is a highly profitable cash crop of marijuana plants on a Californian farm. The only risk attached to this pure form of capitalism is, Mrs Thatcher will be happy to learn, a rather muddled form of state interference: the cops sometimes accept bribes to leave you alone, and then steal your crop anyway. But what the hell? You just go and get somebody else's, taking care to dodge the land-mines.

Snoo Wilson is the fourth playwright in what might very loosely be called the class of '68 to have a major work staged this autumn and he is the one who, with a crackly, entertaining if erratic piece of writing, brings us back to basics without putting a single moralising speech into a character's mouth except for satirical purposes.

Howard Brenton and David Edgar ended their plays wishfully or hopefully at peace camps, pleading with women to get the Left out of its Slough of Despond. Howard Barker, like Edgar focusing on the Labour Party, remained in the Slough, wallowing in the appalling tension between public principle and private practice thrown up by a party conference. I'm surprised to find his play, *A Passion in Six Days*, reverberating most.

But in the context of *The Grass Widow* both hope and despair look like easy options. There are four apparently opposed characters, but the point is that they need each other: the farm has been inherited with doubtful legality by the ex-wife of a dead grass-grower; she in turn is threatened by a psychopathic debt-collector and drug-dealer accompanied on his rounds by a nutty whore with a sideline in producing ectoplasm from a surprising place and a desire to get away from it all; and the widow's only ally is a resident Englishman who wants to be a writer but who seems to have little appetite for much more than his confessed creed of 'clever talk and sex'.

For large portions of the play it is possible to identify with Alan Rickman's laid-back Englishman. He seems civilised; more importantly he seems morally detached from gangster capitalism, even if he confesses again that 'everyone round here's a writer but you can't finish a sentence while street prices hold'. But, partly because he fancies the widow, and partly because he is buying time at whatever cost to loaf or write or whatever he really wants to do, he is drawn

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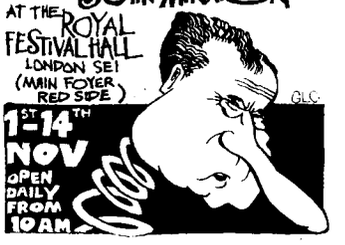

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into the conspiracy and comes genuinely to life when he leads a night expedition, commando-style, to steal someone else's pot.

Nor is there much help from Wilson's women. The widow Lorraine is liberated enough to want her share of the action, not to reject the action; the 1980s-style moll has only her sex to exploit as a way to freedom, and of course it just gets her in deeper. Tracey Ullman's deadpan seriousness while delivering nonsense psychic or psychotherapeutic perceptions breathes new life into some old gags, while her deep tan under a short white dress and gold bangles, and her enthusiasm for a TV cooking programme 'telling you how to make real mashed potato' will do for all the pretty, silly side of California. Ron Cook's psychopath and Leslee Udwin's widow are both surprisingly capable of vestigial sympathy in Max Stafford-Clarke's production of an unsentimental, tense and pointed play.

The full title of Christopher Durang's play is **Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You,** and it is the second half of a double bill. The first half, mercifully short, has Christopher Timothy dreaming he has to go on stage in half an hour as Elyot in *Private Lives*. The play turns into *Hamlet*, *Endgame* and then *A Man For All Seasons* before *An Actor's Nightmare* ends. It's a mildly entertaining squib of the kind usually done better by undergraduate revues.

Then Maria Aitken, an ever-more-formidable actress, plays an authoritarian, ignorant nun answering questions about Papal infallibility, her 26 brothers and sisters and their mad mother, purgatory and limbo, and the sin that makes God puke. Confronted with murderously disgruntled former pupils she produces a gun and sends them to heaven and hell. So there is a deadly ignorance in some Christians: what else is new? There are also Christians who do not duck out of the repeated question about why God allows evil, and it is the clever ones who make sharper comedy and more interesting plays.

Francis – he becomes a saint towards the end of Julian Mitchell's play but earlier than most, as he is still alive at the time – is not particularly clever but he is a genuine subversive since he rejects cleverness. He also rejects not merely wealth but organisation and hierarchy, sensing that these are ways of getting, and excusing, wealth for a religious order.

Unfortunately his followers don't always see it the same way. An early scene has them gathering in the mountains and leaping up and down like small boys who have been given not the keys so much as a majority shareholding in a sweet factory; they don't realise that Francis wants to abolish the factory. But hierarchs rule, OK?

What leads Julian Mitchell to make a thoroughly ordinary play out of a story whose tensions he has certainly spotted I don't know, but it is a conventional 'Life of the Saint' narrative in which everything from Francis's first boyish chat with God to the reception of the stigmata themselves glides by on even keel. Kenneth Branagh is pink and passionate as Francis but ends up reflecting the blandness of the writing. Perhaps there is too much faithfulness to mere fact: to find out the difficulty of living in the image of Christ Mitchell might have taken his Francis to a Labour Party conference or a Californian farm. □

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FIRST PERSON

Anna Coote

My heart belongs to daddy

VIRAGO'S NEW anthology, *Fathers: Reflections by Daughters*, has prompted me to reflect on mine. Where do I start? Shake the hat and pull out a ticket. First thoughts on a sea-faring man.

My father was away in a submarine when I was born and didn't meet me until I was six months old. When I was about two-and-a-half, he took me sailing in a boat called *The Jolly Roger*. The sea was calm and the sun was out. The boat had a small cabin with a couple of bunks and the mattresses were being aired on the cabin roof. One fell off into the sea. In the turmoil that followed, as the boat tacked round and round, as the boom swung and the rigging creaked, as my father shouted and heaved himself about and stabbed at the errant mattress with a boathook, my psyche received its first scar. I still hate sailing: it scares me rigid. But it wasn't the sea or the boat or the mattress that did for me. It was the sense I had then that my large, loud, forceful father was slightly out of control. Enough to bring the sky down on a two-year-old.

Poor man, he had three daughters. A big, bluff man's man in a house of women. I was the second girl to arrive. He called me 'the Weasel' because I was small. On my fifth birthday he gave me a blackboard with a wooden stand and wrote on it: 'An Easel for the Weasel.'

He had this joke he used to play on me. He would pick me up and sit me on his knee and say to me very slowly and seriously: *'Black's white.'* I would burst out laughing. I always did – usually before he'd started saying it, because I knew what was coming. I'd crease up and giggle my little heart out. Pretty dumb, you might think. But the joke had to work or the sky would fall down. This went on for years.

Another thing he'd do to amuse me was give me Chinese burns. Do you know what a Chinese burn is? You grab someone by the wrist and twist both hands as though you were wringing out a wet towel. It doesn't hurt a lot but it stings. I'd yelp and giggle helplessly: 'No, no Daddy, stop please stop!' Often he'd proceed from Chinese burns to tickling, until I was shrieking for mercy. My mother would come to the rescue and beg him not to be rough. He might have had more fun with a son.

My sister Belinda was born when I was six. I told her I was writing this article. 'Don't forget the Chinese burns,' she said. We had not spoken of them for more than a quarter of a century. 'You had it easy,' she went on, 'he used to *chuck* me across the room. He'd call out "Catch!" to whoever was there and I'd find myself whizzing through the air.' Then she reminded me about church.

My father believes in god, rather (it seems to me) as he believes in the absolute necessity of passing the port clockwise. But he is none too keen on organised religion, except for weddings and funerals. When we used to visit my mother's parents in Dorset, we had to go to church on Sunday. One day we were all there – my grandparents in their regular pew and the rest of us lined up behind them. Belinda, then aged three or four, leaned over during a hymn and shifted my grandfather's hat from its place beside him, so that it would be right underneath him when he sat down. This so affected my father that he could not control his mirth. He hit upon the idea of giving Belinda a Chinese burn. She started squealing and he had to take her out, in case she disturbed the congregation. After that, he knew he was on to a good thing. My little sister would be marched out of church, red-wristed and convulsed with giggles, whenever the sermon was dull.

When I was thirteen he left the navy and became an executive in Fleet Street – doing well until toppled in a board-room feud. *Private Eye* occasionally refers to him as 'Capt. J. O. Coote RN (Submerged)'. Now he works from home, keeping up a furious lifestyle, by sheer will-power where economies fail. Pictures of ships and boats cover the walls.

He loves to have his daughters visit him and cracks open champagne, to hell with the overdraft. He sits at the head of the table, carving the roast and issuing orders: 'Open that bottle of claret, will you, sport?' There is usually a point in the evening when the atmosphere changes at one end of the room and you find he has cut out of the conversation. 'There, Dinah,' *sotto voce*, is all you hear instead, 'good girl . . . here, Lucy . . .' The patriarch, reclining in his big oak chair, is lobbing Brie to the dogs.

My parents sometimes wish their daughters led more conventional lives. How did they manage to produce three Labour-voting renegades, all with feminist sympathies and not a Volvo or a timbered cottage or a chartered accountant between us? I'd put it down to their own wicked blend of authoritarianism, non-interventionism and unswerving parental loyalty. 'What d'they pay you?' is the first question my father asks when he sees an article of mine. He may think it's nonsense, but he wants me to get the 'full whack' for it. □

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WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2796 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Can we have Borrow visiting Benidorm, Boswell on the Doctor's encounter with the Scottish oil towns, Cobbett after his rural ride through Milton Keynes, Sterne's sentimental journey through the Common Agricultural Policy, or any other updated travels? Up to 150 words, by 25 November.

No 2793 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Punning answers.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

'As many goes as you like,' we rashly announced; *après ça le déluge*, as any fool could have predicted. It was equally predictable that yours truly would get the short straw. I shredded all the Krafft-Ebing puns forthwith (my memory isn't *that* bad, you know), leaving a mere 2,463 one-liners to be winnowed. This severely aggravated the nagging brain injury that has kept me on the substitutes' bench for so much of the season. A quid a quip for you; for me, immediate trepanation.

How did Churchill avoid war? George Orwell.
Why is a certain starlet's name always inscribed above urinals? Pia Zadora.
I. D. M. MORLEY

What do the Americans call smashing up lavatories? John Biffen.
What do Brummies call agitators? Reuters.
MARGARET ROGERS

Why did Mrs Attlee never have to cook breakfast? Because Clement Freud.
What is the latest gossip in gay bars? Edward Fitzgerald.
PETER NORMAN

What's Mr Glitter's worry? Garibaldi.
What does her horse say to the princess? Andropov.
How does Jimmy Carter feel nowadays? Mrs Whitehouse.
VICTORIA PLUMB

How do we get British Summer Time? Adenauer.
What happened when someone told Hammerstein he couldn't write? Oscar Wilde.
C. FEVER

What did the Sloane Ranger robber say to her victim? Hans Arp.
How does one pay Paul? Robespierre.
BOB SCOTT

Do the Welsh make love? Offenbach.
How do they feel afterwards? Blumenbach.
DAVID TOLEY

What's the Chinese aperitif? Shelley.
What is a male chastity belt? Knoblock.
How did Joe get to his cafe? Kafka.
GERRY HAMILL

What do the French know about social history? Foucault.
What do you do when you've lost your violin? Ucello.
BRENDAN GORSE

What is the opposite of goodness in peace? Evelyn Waugh.

What does the Scottish football supporter do on the train to Wembley? Kierkegaard.
N. J. WARBURTON

What did Hitler ask his mum when she told him to give up politics? Weimar.
Who lacked sympathy for soldiers? Liddell Hart.
KEN RUDGE

What did Chris Evert do? Marie Lloyd.
What did the Italian trouser repairer ask? Euripides.
V. ERNEST COX

What genuflection gets you the Booker Prize? Coetzee.
FIONA PITT-KETHLEY

What's the best way of seducing Matildas? Walsingham.
On which novelist did Edmund Wilson bank? Nat. West.
What does an indecisive gigolo eventually do? Chagall.
WILL BELLENGER

What does an awkward body do for a Russian? Maxim Gorky.
PETER VEALE

What does a genteel matron call her dog? Feydeau.
P. M. KNIGHT

What was Oedipus's attachment? Maeterlinck.
PATRICK HARVEY

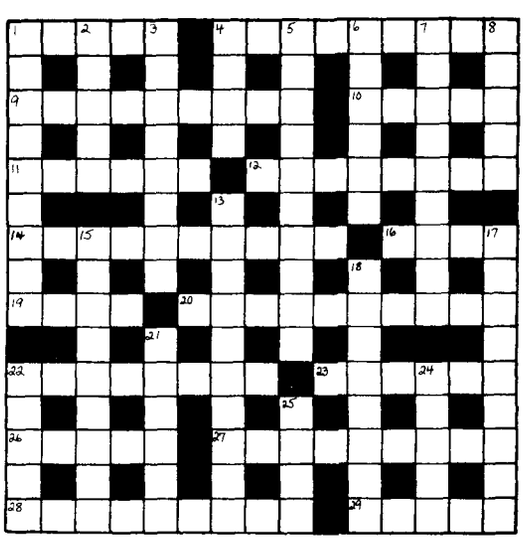
Why are economic arguments forever going round and round? Jeremy Bentham.
JOHN SWEETMAN

What did exhausted farm labourers look forward to? Wayne Sleep.
SIDNEY EVANS

How do choreographers spend their time off-duty? Fokine.
NAOMI MARKS

Weekend Crossword 1420

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1420, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 22 November.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

ACROSS

1. Animals which turn up with their mothers (5)
4. Speed in the preparation of plates for publications (9)
9. Tears about with a royal, thus getting exposure (9)
10. Author who is not quite long enough for the student (5)
11. Provides little space to swot a footnote (6)
12. An opening into an uninteresting town (8)
14. Coloured sailor and flyer (3,7)
16. Where a recluse does without it (4)
19. Position it in the London area (4)
20. Verse meant to be revised in the saint's name (10)
22. Uncivilized although it contains pubs (8)
23. Restraint shown by railways on strike (6)
26. Corn which starts seeding in sandstone (5)
27. It may be a handicap but there is nothing in faulty research (9)
28. Exists among the left-overs for the impractical (9)
29. The man in front it usually ignores (5)

DOWN

1. If abbreviated these communications would do for policemen (9)
2. She would lose her head for a song (5)
3. Ready to be posted east, join headlong flight (8)
4. Piano tune which is not a solo (4)
5. Make funny anagram act as basis of liberty (5,5)
6. It is tough about me being injured (6)
7. Ten men possibly about to perform a parliamentary procedure (9)
8. Shabby sound of air-raid precautions (5)
13. Points in which I take pleasure are not the main illustrations (10)
15. Resolve to hinder my people (9)
17. Criminals who back a racehorse? (9)
18. Met Green looking untidy and just coming out (8)
21. One who makes it dull as a subject? (6)
22. Large rose seen on the coast (5)
24. Did business with wood on the front of the table (5)
25. Where brutes may be introduced in braces (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1419

B	E	N	I	G	H	T	E	D		A	S	S	A	M
A		O		L		R		O		B		O		E
C	A	N	T	A	T	A		V	A	N	I	L	L	A
K		P		N		I		E		O		V		N
S	O	L	A	C	I	N	G		F	R	I	E	N	D
		U		E		B		H		M		N		E
P	A	S	S		M	A	L	E	F	A	C	T	O	R
L				B		N		A		L				E
E	A	S	T	E	N	D	E	R	S		F	R	E	D
A		H		R		S		T		P		O		
S	M	I	L	E	S		P	E	N	E	L	O	P	E
U		N		N		M		N		N		K		V
R	A	G	T	I	M	E		I	N	C	L	I	N	E
E		L		C		S		N		I		N		R
S	W	E	D	E		H	I	G	H	L	I	G	H	T

Prizewinners to 1419

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John Hammond (Plumtree, S. Notts)

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Work will be geared to drafting policy documents and preparing briefing papers for the NEC and its sub-committees, for the union's senior officers and for other specialist officers. The Research Officer will have day to day responsibility for the running of the Research Department, comprising a small team of researchers and research clerks.

Candidates will be expected to possess management skills, and experience of trade union research, particularly in the pay and health and safety fields, is essential.

Knowledge of the NHS and local authority residential care services would be an advantage, as would a good degree in the social sciences.

This is an ideal post for an existing post-holder in trade union research seeking promotion, and who is prepared to make a contribution to the Confederation over a period of years. The use of initiative and a sense of responsibility are essential requirements for the job, which includes working in close support to the Confederation's senior officers.

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He/she will be a Labour Party member, with knowledge and an understanding of the Labour movement adding a distinct advantage. He/she will report to the Director of Publicity and work closely with the Press desk and contribute to the Party's general publicity/campaigning activity. Membership of the NUJ or appropriate union will be required.

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Application forms for both posts are obtainable from: **The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT (Telephone 01-703 0833), and should be returned not later than Friday, 25 November 1983.**

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Equity has a vacancy for an Organiser based in its London office. Applicants should have previous trade union experience, and an interest in the Arts and Entertainment.

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The emoluments of the Visiting Fellow will be determined by the Faculty Board within the range £2,000 to £4,000 for tenure of one term. The Board may also reimburse part or all of the cost of the Visiting Fellow's travel expenses.

Officers of the University of Cambridge are not eligible for the Visiting Fellowship.

Further information may be obtained from: **The Secretary, Judith E. Wilson Fund, Faculty Board of English, University of Cambridge, 9 West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DP,** to whom applications, containing a *curriculum vitae*, should be sent so as to reach him not later than **16 December 1983.**

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LISTINGS

FRI 11 NOVEMBER

LIVERPOOL Labour Co-ordinating Committee Public Meeting. Spkr. Peter Hain 'The Crisis and Labour's Future. 8pm Municipal Annexe, Dale St. **Org Merseyside Labour Co-ordinating Committee, Dr Paul Thompson, day St Helens 33766 x 22, eves. 051-727 6353.**

BRISTOL Skill-sharing Weekend (until 13th). Workshops incl Activating membership, improving planning, talking to the public, influencing MPs (with CND's new Parliamentary worker). £8/£4 UB40 includes food, accommodation (do you need bed or will floor space do?). Creche available if notified in advance. Cheques to West Region CND. **Details: Dan Plesch, 7 Quarrington Rd, Bristol 7. 0272-513631.**

LONDON National Movements in Ethiopia: The case of Tigray. Recent political developments and the current drought. People's Liberation Front followed by discn/videos. 6.30-9.30pm Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, NW1. **Org Friends of Tigray, 6 Stratfield Cl., Cambridge CB4 3NA.**

SAT 12 NOVEMBER

LONDON Book Sale 3.30-6pm Rosslyn Hall, Willoughby Rd (off Hampstead High St) NW3. **Org Amnesty International Hampstead Group.**

LIVERPOOL Freeports Conference. 10am-5pm Transport House, Islington. Spkrs incl trade unionists from Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ireland, UK. Joint Orgs. TGWU (region 6)/N. W. War on want. **Details War on Want, 300 Oxford Rd., Manchester. 061-273 8838.**

CAMBRIDGE 'Nuclear Defence: For and Against'. 10.30am-5.30pm Lady Mitchell Hall, Sidgwick Ave. Spkrs incl John S. Gummer MP, Roger Scruton, Duncan Campbell. Government film: 'The Peace Game'. Bookstalls, exhibitions, refreshments, creche. **Details: Michael Grubb, 44 Tenison Rd, Cambridge. 0223 66477 x 444 (day), 0223 355053 (eves).**

COVENTRY 2-day conf. 'Socialism & the Green Movement. How can socialists and greens work together for a society that's red and green? What can they learn from each other? £6/£3 unwaged. Creche. 11am. Coventry Polytechnic Block M. **Org SERA & Green CND. Details: SERA 01-439 3749.**

LONDON Conference of Professions for World Disarmament & Development. 9am-6pm County Hall, SE1. Workshops chaired by Sean MacBridge, Prof. Frank Barnaby, etc. **Details: 01-455 5005.**

SUN 13 NOVEMBER

LONDON 'The UN comes to London', 2nd day of Conf. of Professions for World Disarmament. 12-6pm County Hall, SE1. Spkrs incl Government disarmament experts from UK, Australia, USSR on 'After the UN 1982 Special Session on Disarmament, what next?' Tickets £1 from Colette Galza, 63 Morshead Mans, Morshead Rd, W9. **Details: 01-455 5005.**

LONDON Poets, musicians perform Brecht, Britten, Prokofiev, etc. 7.30pm at Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, NW1. Action painting by Felix Topolski, introduced by Murray Malvyn. Devised by Torriano Meeting House. **Details: 01-482 0044.**

MON 14 NOVEMBER

LONDON 'Mass Politics – the way Forward for Labour'. Launch meeting for S. London Labour Co-ordinating Committee. 7.30pm Rm. 121 Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton. Spkrs Harriet Harman MP, Kate Hoey, Cllr Stuart Lansley. **Details: Julian Eccles 01-272 8900 (day).**

NOTTINGHAM 'European Nuclear Disarmament & the Peace Movement'. Spkr Ken Coates 7.30pm Adult Education Centre, Shakespeare St, University of Nottingham Peace Lectures.

TUES 15 NOVEMBER

LONDON 'Patients Needs First', Emergency Conf. for NHS consumer groups. 10.30am-4pm YWCA, 16/22 Gt. Russell St, WC1. Fee £5 incl coffee/tea (no lunch). Application forms from: **Assoc. of Community Health Councils, 362 Euston Rd, NW1 3BL. 01-388 4814.**

CARSHALTON Public Meeting. Spkrs Tony Benn, Geoff Dixon. 8pm Carshalton Public Hall, High St, Carshalton. Org Business Press Intl. Ltd. Workplace Branch of Labour Party. **Details: Margaret Hardley, 01-661 3981.**

LONDON 'Medical Aspects of Nuclear War'. Lunch-hour lecture by Dr. Mark McCarthy. Darwin Theatre, University College, Gower Street, WC1. Adm free.

MANCHESTER 'The New Right on Science and Technology'. Spkrs E. Yoxen, K. Green. Meeting at 7.30pm Polytechnic Students Union, Sidney St (off Oxford Rd). **Org BSSRS, 9 Poland St, London, W1.**

WED 16 NOVEMBER

BATTERSEA 'The militarisation of Daily Life in East and West' CND/END Public Meeting with E. P. Thompson. 7.30pm Lower Town Hall, Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill, SW11 (behind Arts Centre). Part of Wandsworth Peace Week. **Details: Roger Mansor, Flat 4, 25 The Drive, Sidcup, Kent. 01-302 7323.**

SUTTON 'Soviet Foreign Policy'. Spkr Yuri Mazur, First Secretary at the Soviety Embassy in London. 8pm Friends Meeting House, 10 Cedar Rd, Sutton. **Details: George Dodd, Sutton CND, 16 Chatsworth Rd, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey. 01-644 4408.**

THURS 17 NOVEMBER

LONDON 'Let's implement 'Butler' on Mental disorder and Crime'. Prof. Edward Griew, University of Leicester. 5.15pm Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, University College Faculty of Laws (rear entrance NW corner Gordon Sq., WC1).

LONDON Marxism in Britain – Regions and Nations. Lecture 4 in series on Wales by Dafyyd Ellis Thomas MP. 7.30-9.30pm Marx House, Clerkenwell Grn, EC1.

CARDIFF 'Whistleblowing and nuclear secrecy'. Spkrs Ross Hesketh, Robert C. Aldridge. 7pm Law Dept., University College, Museum Ave/Corbet Rd. **Org SANA, Tom Horlick Jones, 32 Talworth St, Roath, Cardiff. 0222 493196.**

LONDON 'The Formulation and Implementation of the Youth Training Scheme'. Seminar and discn led by Mick Farley, Ass. Sec. Nat. Assoc. of Teachers in Further Education. 5.30-7.30pm. Rm 3B18, King's College, Strand, WC2. **Org Politics, Education and Society Seminar Group, c/o 01-836 5454 x 2325.**

FRI 18 NOVEMBER

YORKSHIRE Irish Freedom Movement Trade Union Delegation to Ireland (eve. to early Tues. 22 Nov.) Discn with republicans and anti-imperialist trade unionists. Transport from Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford. Delegate fee £40 (incl transport). **Details: 01-274 3951. IFM, BM IFM, London, WC1N 3XX.**

BEACONSFIELD 'Civil Defence in Bucks – the Facts'. Spkrs incl Col. J. Booth, Bucks County Emergency Planning Officer, 7.30pm Butlers Court School, Wattleton Rd. **Details: P. Clarke, South Chiltern Peace Group, 74 Kings Rd, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks.**

FORTHCOMING

19 NOV YORK 'Women and Work' day-school for women and men. Talks, film, bookstall, etc. Creche. No facilities for disabled. £2/£1 unwaged. Register 9.30am (ends 4pm). Phoenix Building, College of St John, Ripon and York, Lord Mayor's Walk. **Details: Ann Newnham, York 56771 x 253/Pat Lyons, Ripon 2691 x 203.**

19 NOV LEEDS Peter Sedgwick Northern Memorial Evening. Social gathering, reading from his letters and articles, recollections of his life by his friends. Food/drink. All welcome. Leeds University Economics and Social Science Bldg. **Details: Dave Coates, Dept. of Politics, Leeds University.**

19 NOV WANDSWORTH Peace Week ends. Dayschool 9.30-5.30pm incl workshops with Mike Gapes, Bill Hodgson, Martin Bond. £1/50p unwaged. Lunch 50p. Garfield Community Centre, Garfield Rd, SW11 (off Lavender Hill). Social evening incl disco, entertainments, raffle. £2.50/£1 unwaged incl food. 7.30-12pm Roundhouse pub, Wandsworth Common Nside, SW18. **Details: Catherine, 01-223 4972/Sue, 01-228 5144.**

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SEXUALITY WORKSHOP. 18/20 Nov. Details: DCS, 41 Mayfield Road, Timperley, Cheshire.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 13 Nov. 8 p.m. Q/A meeting. 'Reincarnation & Karma'. Wed. 16 Nov. 7.30 p.m. 'The Theosophical Movement' Commemoration. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

TRIBUTE TO WILFRED BURCHETT. Tues. 22 Nov. 7.30 p.m. House of Commons Grand Committee Room. John Pilger, James Cameron, John Halliday, Sam Russell, Chris Mullin, David Munro, Connie Seifert. Chair: Ernie Roberts. Apply: Joan Guille, 01-858 7930. 52 St John's Park SE3.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: The 1983 Creighton Lecture will be given by Mr Keith Thomas (Reader in Modern History at St John's College, Oxford) entitled: 'THE PERCEPTION OF THE PAST IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND' at 5.30 p.m. on Monday 21 November 1983 at the University of London, *Senate House, Malet Street*, London WC1E 7HU. The Chair will be taken by Professor J. H. Burns (Professor of the History of Political Thought, University College London). Admission free, without ticket.

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ALIVE, INTELLIGENT woman, 44, political, plump and fun, seeks tallish, left-wing, unattached male, up to 50, for sensual, intellectual and important relationship (London). Box 6953.

AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL woman, London resident, seeks the perfect male companion, 45-55, *unattached, attractive, imaginative,* sophisticated, socially concerned, etc. (o.n.o.). Box 6910.

ARE YOU SEEKING male only or female only contacts etc? Long standing service, all areas and worldwide. Stamp please: Harmony, The Golden Wheel, Liverpool L15 3HT.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE (37), social worker, many interests, seeks intelligent, interesting, attractive man, to share warm, lasting relationship. Photo appreciated. NE England. Box 6965.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE, 40+, seeks socialist, non-sexist male for friendship, fun and quiet times. North London/Herts. Box 6922.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL man (58), intd the arts, seeks attractive, intelligent, sensual, non-smoking woman, any race/circumstances for warm friendship/enjoyments. London/surrounding area. Box 6887.

ATTRACTIVE, WARM, intelligent, sociable lady, 39, looking for kind, humorous man, 40s, to share wide cultural interests. London based. Box 6970.

ATTRACTIVE, YOUNG, mid-sixties divorcee, professional, London-based film maker, seeks companionship with interesting, intelligent, forward looking man, who loves the arts, travel and life. Box 6967.

BATH/BRISTOL: person (male), 35, tall, fair, graduate, quiet Virgo-type, unemployed and solitary (except in queue), seeks unattached woman for friendship. Box 6948.

BEARDED HUMOROUS London writer, journalist, seeks non-smoking, slim female, 21-29, who appreciates culture, wine bars, reviewing plays, films and witty, enlightened conversation. Box 6912.

BRISTOL AREA, attractive woman, forties, professional background, wishes to meet professional man similar age. Humour essential. Permanent relationship. Box 6918.

CARING GENTLEMAN, Jewish (non-orthodox), 40s, seeks slim woman, 30s, with intellectual and other pursuits, for genuine relationship. Phone number please. Box 6937.

COSMOPOLITAN IRISH expatriate, 60, Agnostic, biologist, divorced, no dependants, living pleasantly but unfulfilled in West London, will devote himself to an experienced, lovable and lovely woman, 45-55, who can still enjoy living and lovemaking with an appreciative man. Hopefully she is sensitive, imaginative, ready to share her freedom of thought and ideas, and to be loved and cherished at home and abroad, in daylight and in small dark hours after midnight. Box 6938.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating Dept. (NT), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011.

EDUCATED, ACTIVE, independent woman, in fair shape for 50, seeks mutually supporting, loving, permanent relationship with gentle Socialist man. A slightly older version of NK would do (without a G of course); marginally less brilliant would also be OK. In return she could cook, feminise, warm and domesticate, listen, articulate, earn her own bread. Box 6947.

EDUCATED MAN, 50, seeks unattached, sensuous female up to 65, for fun and friendship. Large ladies welcome. Nationality unimportant. Genuine replies with phone number please. London area. Will travel up to 75 miles. Box 6968.

FEMALE (35), based North-East, seeks non-smoking, socially aware male for companionship, travel, theatre, cinema, walks, etc. Box 6930.

FRIENDLY MALE, 38, own flat, car etc. seeks attractive woman for evenings out, weekends away. Interests include: films, rock music, and the GLC. Box 6945.

FRUSTRATED? BORED? Educated, sensitive male, 38, very tall, attached but unfulfilled, seeks woman, 25-45, for midweek discreet indiscretions in London. Warmth and understanding assured. Box 6911.

GENTLEMAN, 42, 6ft, travelled, educated, honest, easily managed, kind-hearted, seeks younger lady, similarly disposed, to search for redeeming vices, even marriage and babies. Box 6952.

GRADUATE TEACHER, 43, warm, sensitive, good-humoured, divorced (London), enjoys fitness, mountain walking, travel, music, company. Is there a like-minded girl for me? Box 6935.

GROUNDED JET'SET lady, glamorous 37, believing in magical moments. Chelsea home, no ties, artistic occupation, seeks elegant, humorous, rich man. Photo appreciated. Box 6933.

HAMPSHIRE: PROFESSIONAL man, 42, sensuous, perceptive, imaginative, with wide artistic interests, seeks intelligent, lively lady for the serious pleasures of a loving relationship. Box 6919.

INTERESTING RUBENESQUE grandma, 40s, seeks grandpa (with a little madness in his soul), our ideal Saturday auction, dinner, opera, only occasional grandpa duties. Box 6915.

LONDON MAN, 59, 5ft 6in, non-smoker, seeks left-wing woman, 45-59, to share interests in *politics, and to enjoy music, theatre etc. in* friendly, relaxed relationship. Box 6961.

MALE GRADUATE, 32, house owner, seeks girlfriend. Interests: music, travel. I am Indian, but nationality, colour unimportant. All letters answered. London/anywhere. Box 6929.

MALE GRADUATE, genuinely seeks woman share rest of life, especially research interests: philosophy, psychology, biology; very fit 63, home Warwickshire farmhouse – room children. Box 6934.

MALE GRADUATE, single, 35, and solvent, would like to meet attractive female under 40. Interests: sport (especially skiing), travel and *wholefood. London or Lancs/Yorks area. Small* photo please (returnable), mine exchanged. Box 6909.

MALE GRADUATE academic, 44, divorced, tall, arts orientated, non-stereotyped, sensitive, seeks attractive, intelligent female, 30s, similar make-up, for sincere relationship. Midlands. Box 6931.

MANCHESTER, SOCIALIST lady, 32, seeks warm, sincere relationship with idealistic, patient and caring male. Any race. No chauvinists/racists. Box 6941.

MIDDLESEX MAN, 26, would like to meet lady to share interests in politics and TU movement as well as social life. Genuine loner's search. Box 6913.

MY EX-WIFE is attractive, kind, virtuous and exceptional. 40 years, 5ft 5in, medium-build, multi-lingual. She deserves a kind, handsome, successful gentleman, 40-50. Write with photo to her at Box 6949.

NICE WOMAN, *32, professional,* tall, reasonably attractive, political moderate, *seeks unattached man, for company/outings/-* relationship, in South London area. Has car and bicycle. Box 6914.

NORTHERN MAN, with strong Liberal tendencies, looking for a lasting relationship with a compassionate, mature, female partner. Has passion for classical literature and music. Box 6946.

NORTHERN WOMAN, now working near Cambridge, seeks friendship of pleasant, sensitive man, 45+, with positive, liberated attitude. Box 6966.

PARAMEDICAL RESEARCHER, PhD, 40s, Asian, non-smoker, seeks educated, attractive young lady, for loving, lasting, stimulating relationship. Nationality/status unimportant. Phone number Box 6923.

PENSIONER, EDUCATED, travelled, solvent, bachelor, non-smoker, non-abstainer, apolitical, seeks suitable person for winter holiday, *to sunbathe, relax and escape the media.* Fifty-fifty. Box 6873.

SHY JOURNALIST, 29, seeks independent woman, for quiet dinners and friendship. London. Box 6891.

STILL CRAZY, Belfast, 34-year-old male, 6ft 3in, not unattractive, seeks lady (25/40), for *friendship, talk and a happy time. Correspon-* dence also very welcome. Box 6926.

SOUTHAMPTON AREA: male, mid forties, with ties, University educated, seeks occasional, uncomplicated friendship with *female of warm, worldly disposition.* Box 6928.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE, literate, lefty lady (33), returning to London after 3 years in the States, needs good, jazz-loving man. Box 6932.

TALL, SLIM, attractive lady, 40, one child. Interests: wholefoods, green politics, homelife, countryside, travel, seeks kind, stable, intelligent man, 35-55, for permanent relationship. Box 6924.

TYNESIDE WOMAN, feminist, early thirties, *would like to meet a delightful, warm and* funny man, for sharing – films, music, countryside – and mutual caring. Box 6944.

UNATTACHED, ATTRACTIVE female graduate, 44, hopes to meet academic or professional man, with wide interests, 45+, arts, *music, dancing, wining, dining.* Box 6940.

UNIVERSITY TEACHER, 51, interests: music, theatre, orientalia, seeks lady with head, heart, senses intact for mutually caring relationship. W. London area most convenient. Box 6960.

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